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Fire Horse (brooch), 2007
sterling silver, diamonds, glass
2 x 3 ⅛ x 1"
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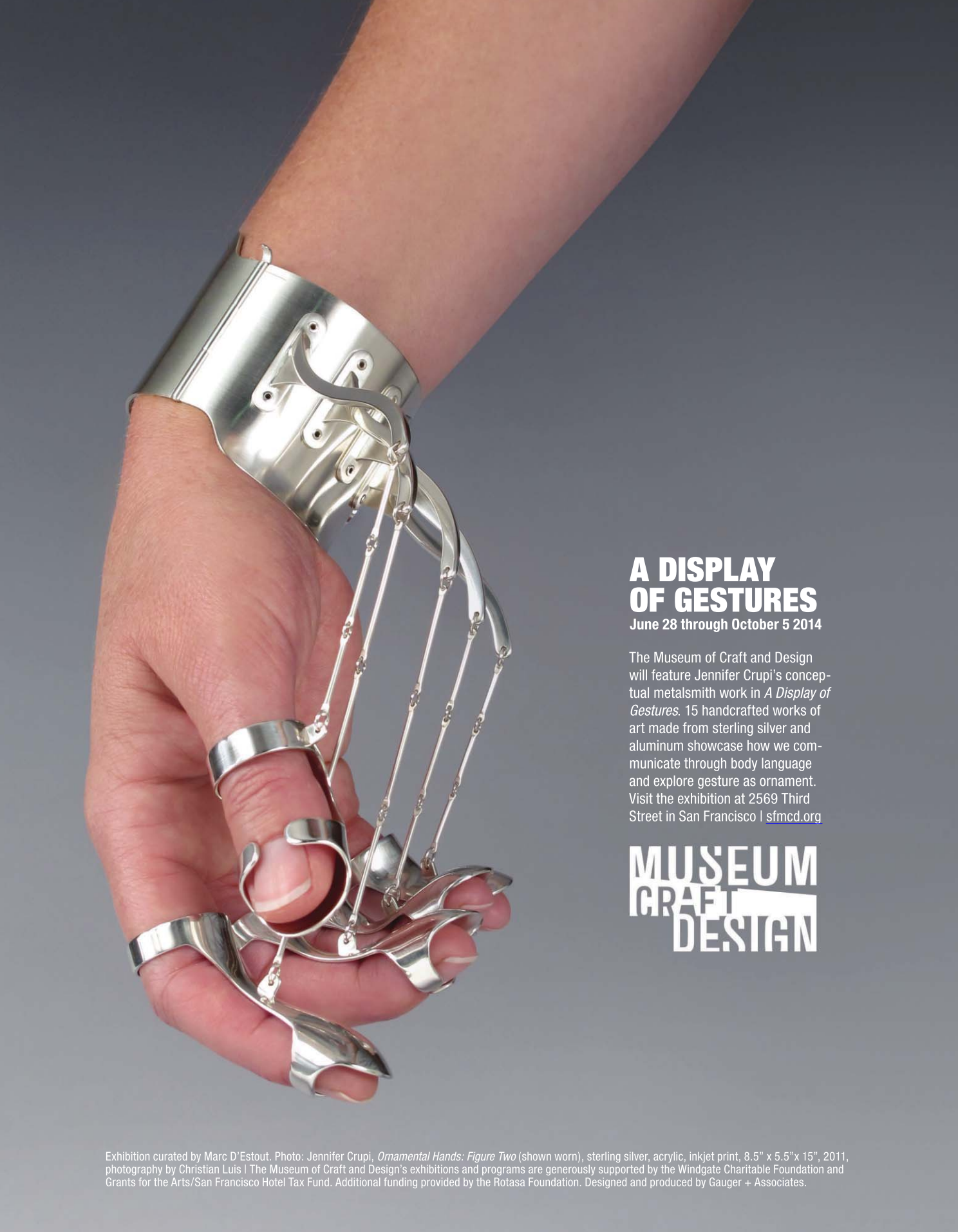

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Exhibition curated by Marc D'Estout. Photo: Jennifer Crupi, *Ornamental Hands: Figure Two* (shown worn), sterling silver, acrylic, inkjet print, 8.5" x 5.5"x 15", 2011, photography by Christian Luis | The Museum of Craft and Design's exhibitions and programs are generously supported by the Windgate Charitable Foundation and Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund. Additional funding provided by the Rotasa Foundation. Designed and produced by Gauger + Associates.

FOREWORD

THE PHRASE "personal is political" was a rallying cry of the 1960s, when feminists sought to link individual concerns with larger social struggles. Just as personal matters are bound to politics, they can firmly be linked to aesthetics, as demonstrated in this issue of *Metalsmith*. Our three featured artists—Helen Britton, Bob Dylan, and Mark Hartung—mine their own histories, memories, and lives to produce work with far-reaching human impact.

The richly endowed jewelry of Helen Britton provides "a means to express and share her deeply personal experiences of the world—its mysteries, confusions, and interrelated forms," according to author Andrea DiNoto. Britton's creative practice is also a way to reflect on aspects of her youth. The industrial city of New South Wales, the bucolic haven of a family farm, beachcombing and collecting, engaging in domestic handcrafts—all are places and experiences that inform her complex jewelry.

Bob Dylan's life might seem like an open book, a story of his journeys and desires as told in lyrics, but lesser known is his work in the visual arts. His metal sculptures have deep roots in his own biography. "I was born and raised in the iron ore country," claims Dylan. "I've always worked with it in one form or another." Like his songs, Dylan's recent "Gates" series reveals a forthrightness and individual investment that has the power to reach multitudes.

The sculptures of Mark Hartung similarly bridge the biographical and social. Taking formal inspiration from antique machinery, folk art, and tin toys, Hartung creates work that addresses specific events and people who have shaped his life. He marvels at the ability of his sculptures to engage others in his private reveries. "I thought that I might be the only one who would have those feelings about them," he says "but people do connect."

Our fourth feature article, on the history of engagement rings, solidly situates the personal within the political, and even legal, spheres. Marriage may be intensely private but it is also usually a public affair, and betrothal rings declare the bond for all the world to see. In this case, as with the art on these pages, the personal is more than political, it is downright wonderful.

SUZANNE RAMLJAK
EDITOR

The mission of *Metalsmith* magazine is to document, analyze, and promote excellence in jewelry and metalsmithing. In fulfillment of the goal of producing a significant document of the field, editorial content will emphasize contemporary activities and ideas, with supportive content to include relevant historical work and critical issues.

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Published by the Society of North American Goldsmiths

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EDITOR Suzanne Ramljak
editor@snagmetalsmith.org
COPY EDITOR Martina D'Alton
GRAPHIC DESIGN Luke Hayman, Ellen Peterson, Pentagram

EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Angela Bubash, Susie Ganch, Ulysses G. Dietz, Suzanne Pugh, Biba Schutz

ADVERTISING John Garbett, jgarbett@snagmetalsmith.org

PRINTER Royle Printing committed to using environmentally friendly materials and methods.

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Metalsmith (ISSN 0270-1146) is published both print and digitally in January, March, June, August, and October by SNAG, 540 Oak Street, Suite A, Eugene, OR 97401, 541-345-5689, www.snagmetalsmith.org.

Membership rates $85/year and up, full membership includes five-issue subscription to *Metalsmith*. Special student rates. Subscription to only *Metalsmith*: $25/year and up.

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The opinions expressed in *Metalsmith* are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the staff or directors of SNAG or *Metalsmith*. Address unsolicited editorial material to: Suzanne Ramljak, 22 Rockwell Road, Bethel, CT 06801. Materials will be handled with care, but the magazine assumes no responsibility for them.

Metalsmith is indexed in the Art Index and EBSCO Media. Newsstand distribution: COMAG Marketing Group, 155 Village Blvd, Princeton, NJ 08540.

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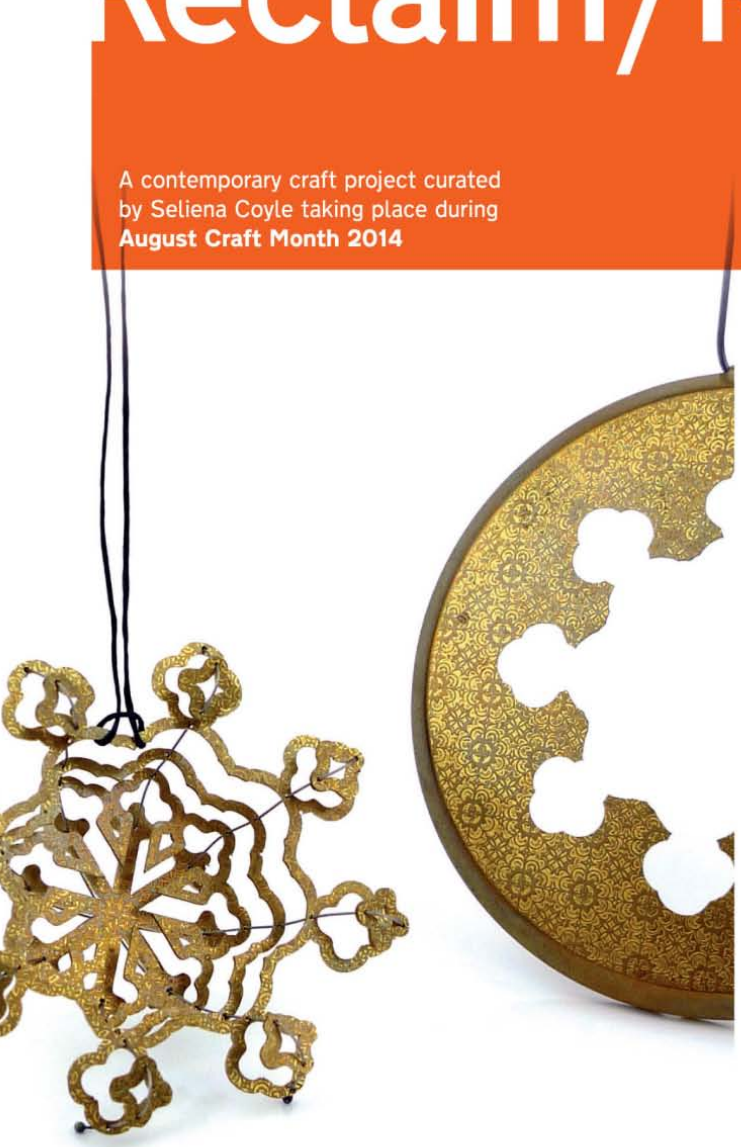

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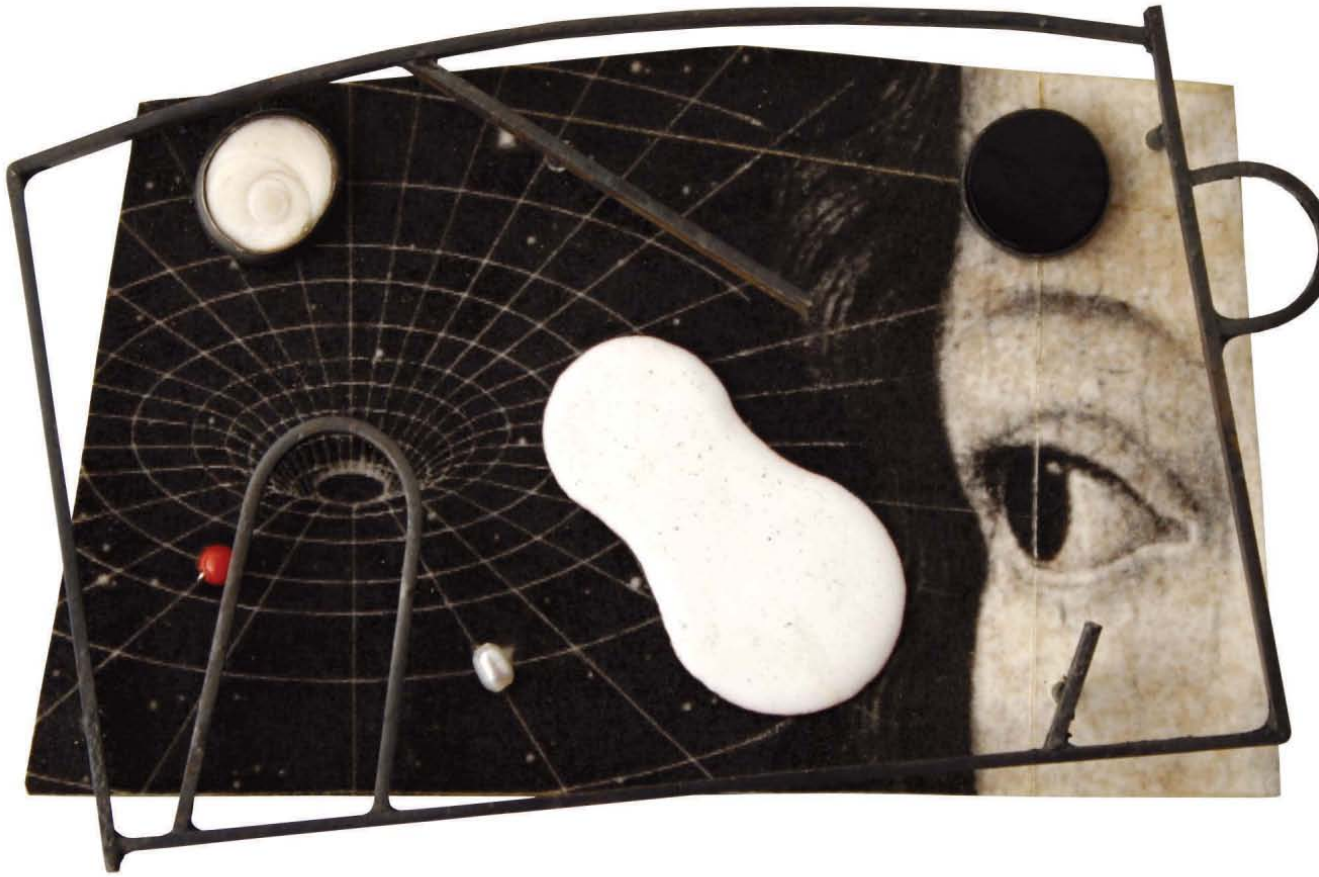

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Ramon Puig Cuyàs, *No. 1279 "Ita est"* (brooch) from the UTOPOS series, 2009. Private collection, New York. Photo courtesy of Ramon Puig Cuyàs

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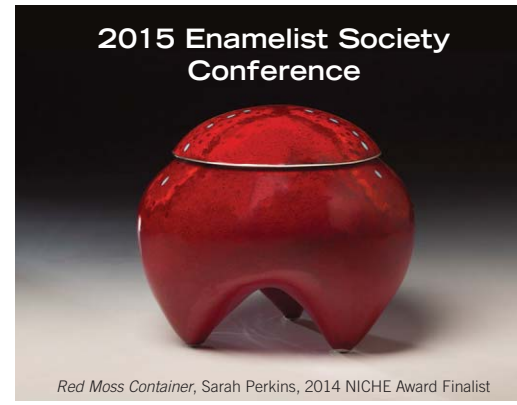

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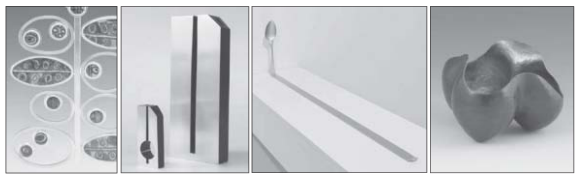

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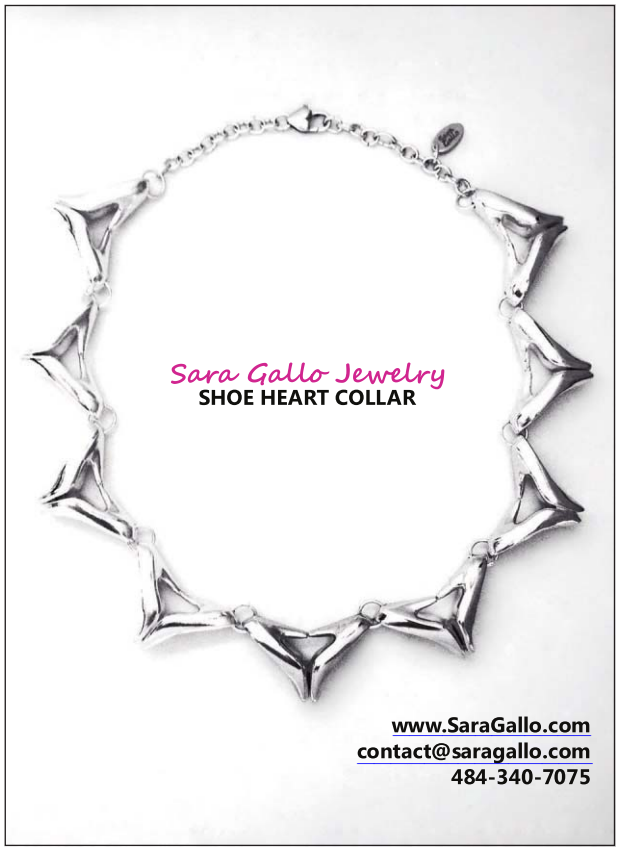

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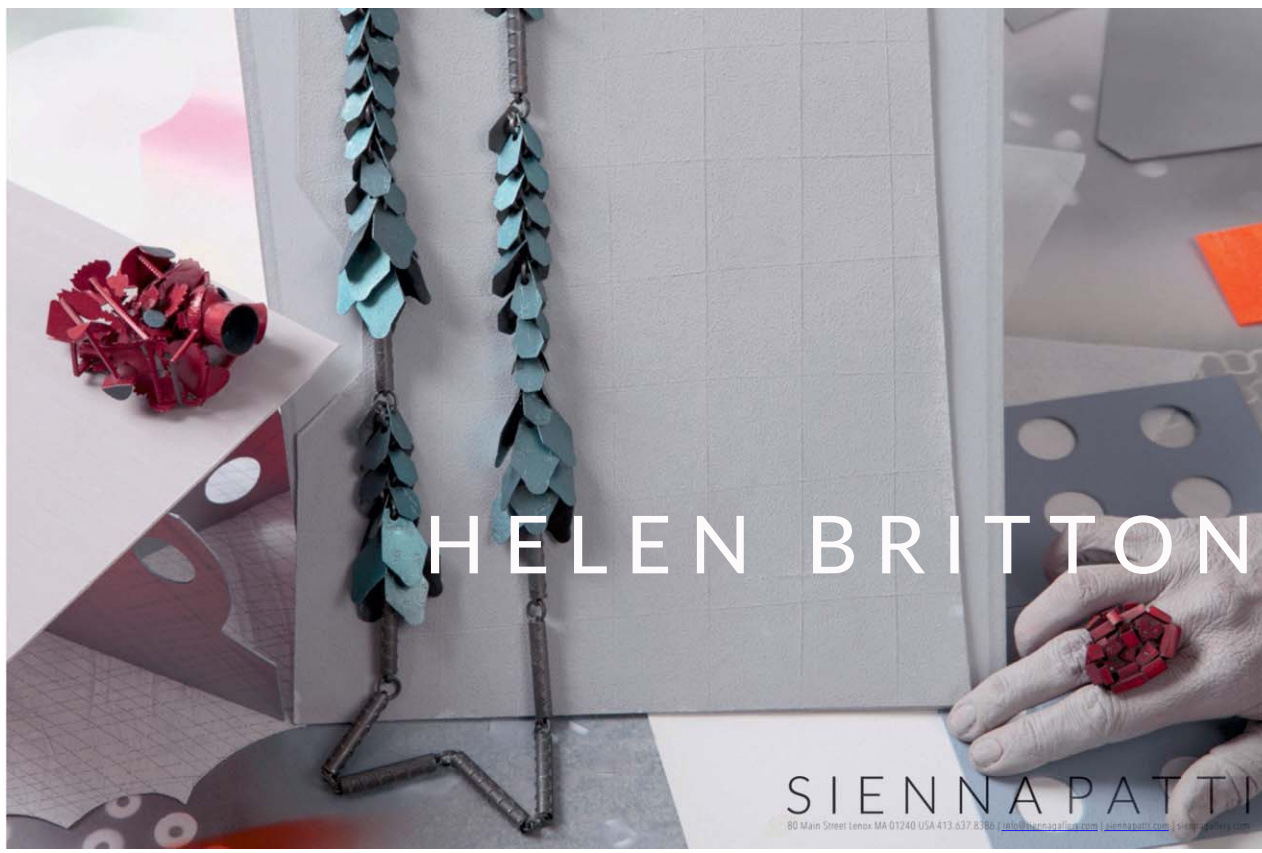

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Contemporary Jewelry in Perspective

EDITED BY DAMIAN SKINNER
ASHEVILLE, NC: LARK BOOKS, 2013
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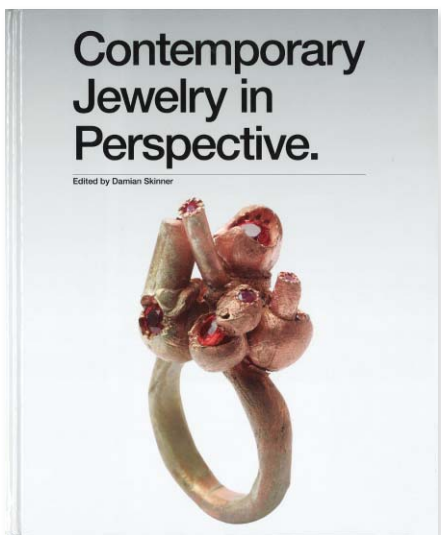


CONTEMPORARY JEWELRY IN PERSPECTIVE aims to be a fresh, new voice in the field. Damian Skinner opted to create an anthology, a collection of short and medium-length essays from nineteen different authors about a whole series of topics concerning present-day art jewelry. As some writers do, Skinner proposes a new nomenclature and suggests that we call it "contemporary jewelry." All his writers fell in line. I have my doubts, because what is contemporary one decade will become old-fashioned the next. Soon we'll have to have "post-contemporary," and then "post-post," and so on. I'll just stick to "studio jewelry."

Skinner divided the book into three parts. First is a series of mini-essays on diverse topics such as photography, workshops, presentation, and pleasure. None of these essays are longer than a page. This does a disservice to themes like "the body," which could be the subject of an entire book. (And has been.) Taken together, however, the mini-essays cover a lot of ground, and each one provokes additional reflection.

The second part is a series of eight histories of modern jewelry. Two are historical introductions. The other six explore geographic or cultural regions: Europe, North America, South America, and so on. The best among them is Skinner's own essay on Australia and New Zealand, in which he examines the near-total difference in the development of studio jewelry in the two countries. Questions of colonial power and the exploitation of indigenous populations must arise, and for the most part, Skinner doesn't flinch. The worst essay is an overlong discussion of South African jewelry. Most of the essays suffer from a shortage of photographs. The writers mention numerous jewelers I have never heard of, piquing my interest. But alas, there were often no pictures. As a visual person, I found this oversight annoying.

The last part is a collection of mid-length essays on topics that inform contemporary jewelry, from the distinction between accessories and jewelry, to the DIY movement. Some of the subjects are peripheral to studio jewelry, like the piece on commercial jewelry. Here, Suzanne Ramljak points out some interesting correspondences between the two types of jewelry. In gathering such a diverse collection of subjects, Skinner's intention is to provide a series of different lenses through which to view contemporary production, with an eye to opening up the discourse. The variety of views is interesting and occasionally provocative.

Like most anthologies, the quality of writing is mixed. Some authors write with vigor and style. Others descend into academic jargon. In Julie Ewington's essay on the meaning of the contemporary, the words "problematize," "interrogate," and "articulate" infest a single page. These are buzzwords intended for pseudo-intellectuals who don't object to high-falutin' clichés. Personally, I despise academic language. Most of it simply replaces clear thinking with obscure words.

There are two themes that run throughout the book. One is that studio jewelry should be critical. The other is that the most fertile territory for the present-day practitioner is in the realm of the hybrid. I completely disagree with the first, and I have reservations about the second.

The theme of criticality is repeated throughout the book, almost reflexively. In his introduction, Skinner approves of Linda Sandino's insistence that studio jewelry should be "a critical practice, rather than a merely supplementary, decorative one."[1] The idea of criticality comes from the 1970s and early 1980s, when quasi-Marxist critics like Hal Foster and Benjamin Buchloh insisted that art must play a role in the radicalization of all citizens, with the ultimate goal of a socialist revolution. Needless to say, this position is utter baloney. Capitalism is not pure evil, and socialism cannot solve every social malady. The idea that the artist is obligated to take a critical attitude toward all things is stunningly inappropriate for jewelry. What of celebration, decoration, comfy domesticity, beauty, self-expression, or simple human kindness? None of these ideas are inherently critical, yet all belong within jewelry. Skinner is quite wrong-headed to place such importance on criticality. It is only one of many valid approaches to jewelry making.

A successful anthology demands uniformly good writing.

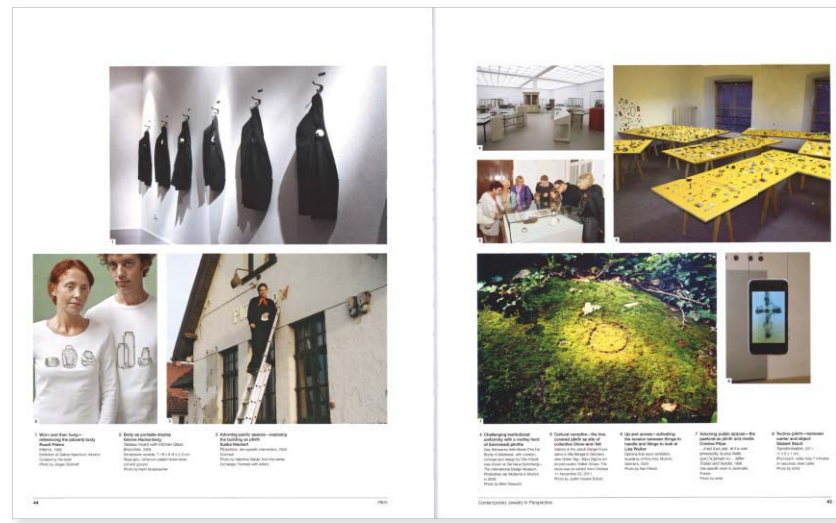
The broad range of subjects treated in *Contemporary Jewelry in Perspective* is a direct outcome of Skinner's faith in hybridization. He wants jewelers to look outside the field for inspiration and information. It's a reasonable position. Furthermore, it's a trendy position. Hybridization is the logical outcome of the standard art school postconceptual, poststudio scheme, which is highly fashionable now. Everybody under thirty wants to do a mash-up of two unrelated fields. Certainly, there are rich possibilities there.

However, it may be more important to look for craft subject matters within craft itself. What are the issues that belong to jewelry itself? We have so many rich ideas to explore: the body and its genders, jewelry as protection, jewelry as semiotic code (for playful rearrangement), jewelry as shaper of identity. Most important, to my way of thinking, is jewelry in its multitudes of social interactions. How does jewelry affect its wearer, and how does it affect its audience? To me, the real juice of jewelry lies in its power as a social actor. Some writers, notably Helen Carnac, began to address the subject, but nobody sustained the inquiry. I wish someone had really drilled in on the idea.

A successful anthology demands uniformly good writing. Skinner himself is an incisive, thoughtful writer, but, sadly, not all his contributors are. Some essays are weak and confused, or evade drawing any definitive conclusions. Me, I favor writing that not only poses questions, but provides answers. Of all the essays, I like Carnac's (on relational aesthetics) and Barb Smith's (on DIY) the best. Both were sharply critical of received wisdom, and refreshingly blunt. That's the kind of writing that can change minds.

There were also surprising insights sprinkled throughout the book. One of my favorites is Namita Gupta Wigger's suggestion that jewelers look into video as a way to explore the dynamics of jewelry as it is worn in social spaces. I don't normally pay attention to critics' advice to artists, but Wiggers makes sense.

I suspect that Skinner wants his book to be a game-changer, a text that will make everybody think differently about the field, I'm pleased that he doesn't stress conceptual jewelry as much as Liesbeth den Besten did in her book *On Jewellery: A Compendium of International Contemporary Art Jewellery* (2011): Skinner is not seduced by trendy art forms such as installation or performance. And his open-mindedness is impressive. Still, I don't think there's anything in the book that will transform our understanding of jewelry. There are lots of tasty bits and pieces, yes, but little that is transgressive, and nothing that alters the big picture.



Bruce Metcalf, a Philadelphia-based studio jeweler and occasional writer, is co-author with Janet Koplos of Makers: A History of American Studio Craft.

1. Linda Sandino, "Studio Jewellery: Mapping the Absent Body," in Paul Greenhalgh, ed., *The Persistance of Craft: The Applied Arts Today* (London, A&C Black, 2002), p. 108.

Julie Speidel

BY JUDY WAGONFELD

"WHILE OTHER PEOPLE buy a Mercedes," says artist Julie Speidel, "I buy a forklift." Symbolically, that choice alludes to an artistic evolution from Lilliputian to Bunyanesque; from a basement jewelry bench to a sprawling workshop, a stay-at-home mom to internationally known sculptor.

Getting there took chutzpah. Armed with a degree in French, Speidel opted for the traditional path of marriage and motherhood. Four children and two marriages later, she grappled with supporting her seven-to-eighteen-year-old brood alone. One day, in 1979, while bathing, she had an epiphany that led to making jewelry. Plunging into classes at Seattle's Cornish College of Arts and Pratt Fine Arts Center, she quickly acquired essential skills. Challenged by a friend remodeling a restaurant, she refashioned the bar's discarded copper into lamps that accented the new interior and in the process picked up welding and electrical skills at a technical school.

Julie Speidel with a work-in-progress in her studio workshop.

Other restaurants ordered lighting from her. She also made copper bracelets, belt buckles, and gold-plated copper necklaces. Carol Dauplaise, an East Coast manufacturer paid $20,000 a year for jewelry designs. Simultaneously, she sold original work locally, at Gail Sevren Gallery in Sun Valley and in New York at the Robert E. Morris Artwear gallery. Expanding into production, in 1980 Speidel established Bonafacio, a company featured in *Vogue*. It was all good until 1985 when an Asian company copied her line. Her attorney advised against legal action in another country and suggested dropping those designs. Rather than develop a new production line, Speidel focused on individual pieces.

Inadvertently, a collector kick-started her artistic shift, commissioning a 5-foot take on her chunky bracelets. The logistics of creating such a massive piece were solved when her jewelry assistant, Gerard Tsutakawa, now an accomplished sculptor, offered his father's metalworking equipment and garage. Soldered bronze sheets, honed in a swirl, delighted the client. As a benefit, the father, George Tsutakawa (1910–1997), who specialized in bronze fountains, shared his secrets for making various Japanese patinas, formulas Speidel still uses.

The piece prompted late gallery owner Linda Farris (1944–2005) to pursue Speidel. In 1987, over two dinners and heart-to-heart mentoring, Farris insisted, "You can't do both—forget the jewelry. Make three sculptures and I'll give you a show this year." To Speidel's surprise large scale felt right. A sphere of orbital bands and articulated donut shapes sold from that first exhibition.

Speidel never looked back. She remarried and fifteen years ago moved to Vashon Island, an idyllic haven a twenty-minute ferry ride from Seattle. The couple live on waterfront adjacent to the site her Speidel grandfather discovered via rowboat, around 1880. Speidel's father, Bill Speidel, a Seattle journalist, businessman, and raconteur, spearheaded the preservation of historic Pioneer Square and started its famous Underground Tour.

Five minutes from home, Speidel's workplace is situated on a five-acre grassy plateau. Edged by soaring Douglas Firs, the site exemplifies Speidel's interplay between humans and nature. Once a Japanese family's strawberry farm, like those depicted in David Guterson's novel *Snow Falling on Cedars*, it lay fallow after the internment of its owners during World War II. The property was purchased by Speidel shortly after moving to the island, and its metal-sided barns have morphed into a warren of industrial workshops. An attached cathedral-ceilinged studio houses a vast art library and array of sculptures. Oriental carpets soften the concrete floor. Steel legs on antique carriage wheels support a fifteen-foot Rosewood worktable. An array of folders, photos, books, sketches, and sculptural models map Speidel's mind. Stones, driftwood, and ceramics hint at her collecting habit.

Calm prevails despite the backlog of projects and exhibitions vying for attention. Each project becomes a muse, inspiring new odes. While thriving on intensity, Speidel savors quietude at home. She walks the beach, reads, and practices yoga, her slender frame and energy belying her seventy-two years.

Speidel's work meanders between abstraction, figuration, and function. Varying

Work table in Julie Speidel's studio on Vashon Island, near Seattle.

Speidel's work meanders between abstraction, figuration, and function.

from tabletop to forklift size, they replicate nothing specific but reference historical sites, nature, totem poles, emotions, and spirituality. Undulating forms interlock. Disparate shapes tuck into frames like chocolates in a box. Reminiscent of the Inuit Inukshuk markers—stacked stones that serve as guides in the wilderness—Speidel's stacked figures vary from whimsical to stoic. Openings filter light and cast intriguing shadows. Dappled patinas in burnt amber and soft blues appear glossy or flat. Red, blue, and yellow car paint finishes gleam like a child's toy. Steeped in the Northwest environment, Speidel often incorporates stone, wood, and flowing water.

According to local Puget Sound folklore, Paul Bunyan and his ox carved the islands of Vashon and Bainbridge. But, truth be told, 15,000 years ago the Vashon Glacier did the deed, bulldozing earth and rocks (known as erratics) to new locations. In 2012 the 150-acre Bloedel Reserve on Bainbridge invited Speidel to create the first art exhibition to be held there. Choosing to honor the glacier, she fabricated twelve faceted rock and ice forms. In natural or jazzily painted stainless steel, the multipart sculptures rose from bluffs, windblown grass, wildflowers, and moss, or floated like icebergs in ponds.

Speidel thinks three-dimensionally and intuitively. Juxtaposing small chunks of wood, bone, or plasticine, she builds maquettes of the larger work. Next come full-sized chipboard models. Finally, she and her three assistants cut, bend, shape, weld, and grind materials, birthing sculptures.

Speidel relishes cultural differences, incorporating diverse ideas while not sacrificing her own. She bears the wisdom of repeated adaptation required by life. Her parents divorced when she was eight. At twelve, Speidel, her sister, and mother moved to Mallorca, and she didn't see her father for ten years. Her mother married a geologist, and England became home. During boarding school breaks, the family explored ancient moors. Megaliths, dolmens, and stone circles transfixed Speidel, leading to a travel addiction and sacred site obsession.

Perusing books on Newgrange and Stonehenge, Speidel sighs at the photography as if seeing her own newborn (or one of her six grandsons). She reflects on postulated purposes: use as calendar devices, sanctuaries for prayer, or places to pay respect. As in these preliterate societies, Speidel's artistic vocabulary connects spiritual and earthly beliefs visually. Curves hail to Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth. Angular joints reflect David Smith and the Northwest's Lee Kelly. However, it's Speidel's ideas that fuel an art primal in essence and distinctly her own. Foreign and ancient names add mystery. Are her sculptures harbingers of the past, commentaries on the present, or omens of the future? The answer could be none or all. Consider them cairns guiding your way.

During Speidel's childhood, her parents downplayed art careers. Although a Stanford graduate, her mother offered this advice: "The best thing a woman can be is helpless because she'll always be taken care of." With dozens of solo shows and thousands of pieces in public and private collections, no one views Speidel as helpless. Always in demand, she recently built a full-immersion baptismal font for a local church. In October 2013 the Tacoma Art Museum contracted her for entryway sculptural benches and erratics.

Dynamic and unaffected, Speidel takes the privilege and responsibility of employing four people to heart. Giving back regionally, she fosters art through sharing, board memberships, and community events. She embodies the will to work hard and follow advice. "When I need to learn something," she says, "I go find someone who can teach it to me; an artist or a person in industry." However, there's one thing she won't learn. Asked what, she laughs, "Driving that forklift."

Judy Wagonfeld, a Seattle based freelance writer, covers art, travel, and people for diverse publications.

Mazama Glacier, 2013
stainless steel
93 x 72 x 79" and 40 x 41 x 48"
Bloedel Reserve, "An Experience, Sculpture in the Landscape"

Silver Necklace, 1980
sterling silver
12 x 8 x ½"

Furthermore:
www.juliespeidel.com

Joanna Gollberg
Branching Out

BY ANDREA DINOTO

FOR JOANNA GOLLBERG, the jeweler known for dramatic and colorful high-prong designs set with rough and faceted gemstones, 2013 was a year of changes, not always pleasant ones. The "Prong" collection was doing just fine, but two other lines were not, and they demanded attention. At the same time, a business partnership with her long-time friend Marthe LeVan was imploding. The women had planned to coestablish Mora, an Asheville, NC, gallery featuring Gollberg's work exclusively, but Gollberg soon realized that the arrangement suited her talents as a craftsperson not at all. (Le Van has continued as sole proprietor, carrying the work of Gollberg and that of other designers.)

Detaching herself from the gallery's corporate structure proved both expensive and traumatic, a painful reality check for Gollberg, who has been in business as a craft jeweler since 1997 and sells exclusively as a consignor. (She holds a degree in jewelry from the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, and is the author of four Lark books on jewelry making.) With the birth of her son, Walker, five years ago, Gollberg had already begun to reexamine her priorities as concerns personal life, work, and business. "I've always made my living from my work," she says, "just not a very big one. I'm not sure if it's because I'm not a good business person," adding that she is "more of a heart-centered person." As it turns out, however, she is committed to keep her business growing and viable while maintaining a "happy life," as she puts it, as both mom and maker.

Although she envisions keeping her operation relatively small, Gollberg has been exploring an expansion, with an eye toward broadening her reach into diverse markets, After attending several JCK shows at the Javits Center in New York in recent years and taking a marketing course, she learned there were over 30,000 retail jewelry stores in the United States and imagined that "certainly 20 will take my work." And when she learned that men's jewelry was the fastest-growing designer jewelry category, she determined to have a go at it. But the issues facing Gollberg were three-fold: how to winnow out appropriate new retail venues while retaining

Organic Ring, 2013
sterling silver, 18k gold, pink tourmaline
¼ x 1 x 1"

Knot Earrings, 2013
sterling silver
diameter 1 ¼"

Wave Bracelet, 2011
sterling silver, semi-precious gems
¾ x 3 x 7 ½"

Jeweler Joanna Gollberg consulting with a client.

Diversification—in a world where being known for one thing is safe and expected—indicates a certain daring in Gollberg's approach.

established relationships within the gallery world; how to adapt her style to a potentially lucrative trend; and how to expand effectively into the thriving online marketplace. Her approach was first to create new work, then to open a page on Etsy, the go-to online marketplace for handmade craft objects,

Now, in addition to the bestselling "Prong" collection ($130–$4,000), she offers three new lines: men's jewelry, which she describes as "somewhat rugged without being too motorcyclish"; the ultra-feminine silver "Knot" line she calls "simple . . . cute, easy to wear . . . and sell"; and the "Organic Stick" line—cast, she explains, "from models I handcarved with a rotary barrel burr, and with a heavy brushed finish." In each case, Gollberg has targeted a different demographic. The men's jewelry line quickly yielded two popular items: cast silver rings, and a wide kangaroo-leather-and-silver bracelet ($250–$300) worthy of a rock star. The "Knot" series, with a low price point of $40, is aimed at the gift market. ("It's a little gimmicky," she admits, "but I don't care because it's fun to make, looks great on, and it sells.") The "Organics" ($60–$340) were designed to have "a little bit of an urban funky edge," says Gollberg, who was delighted to discover that the line's tiny rings sold equally well in 18k gold and in silver. Diversification—in a world where being known for one thing is safe and expected—indicates a certain daring in Gollberg's approach. At one time, she had consignments in about twenty-two stores, but the number would fluctuate as she changed her lines, which she did every three years, "Some stores have carried my different work over the years," she says, "although they tend to want the same thing—proven sellers." But with a diversified collection, Gollberg reasons, different stores may take different lines. And that's fine because, as she points out: "I don't want to be pigeon-holed in the craft jewelry world. Financially it's not enough. I'd love to be in Barneys but maybe it's [the New York emporium] ABC Carpet & Home." Her plan is to target East Coast stores "who might like something a little different," adding to the roster of galleries now carrying her work nationwide. How her business may grow remains to be seen, but for Gollberg one thing is certain: "When I go to work in my studio, I want to feel really happy at the end of the day."

Andrea DiNoto writes on art, craft and design.

Furthermore:
www.joannagollberg.com

Donna Schneier

BY TONI GREENBAUM

OVER THE PAST thirty years, exposure to contemporary jewelry has escalated in the United States, largely due to collectors such as Helen W. Drutt English, Daphne Farago, and Donna Schneier. Each of them, as a means of legitimizing the avant-garde, enlisted major art museums as repositories for their respective holdings. Drutt English's laudable collection is housed in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, while Farago's eclectic array may be enjoyed at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Schneier's diverse offerings—the subject of this inquiry—are apportioned between the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) and The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; Racine Art Museum in Racine, Wisconsin; and Mint Museum of Crafts and Design in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Donna Schneier
PHOTO: LILA PHOTOS

I was fortunate enough to be present when Schneier acquired her first piece of contemporary jewelry, at the British Crafts Centre in London, in 1985—a revolutionary *Necklace/Veil* by England's Caroline Broadhead—an object which, Schneier states, "astonished" her, because "it translated jewelry into art." She bought ten more seminal pieces on that trip, including a painted textile body piece by Lam de Wolf (the Netherlands), subsequently adding works by David Watkins (England), Susana Heron (England), and many other originators. Now a seasoned collector, Schneier combines a confident belief in her chosen field with an impeccable eye, probing intellect, and unflagging generosity. Through her donations of contemporary jewelry, she wishes to document the development of this controversial but compelling art form.

The pieces purchased in London became the basis for the exhibition "Zero Karat: The Donna Schneier Gift to the American Craft Museum" (now MAD), which was installed at the museum from May 30 to September 9, 2002. As the title implies, this collection is comprised of jewelry made from materials with no intrinsic value. At the time of her initial collecting trip to London, Schneier owned a business that sold conventional metal jewelry. After returning to New York, she framed the new "jewels," created from paper, plastic, rubber, nylon, and aluminum, and hung them on her office walls. The intent, she states, was to educate her traditionally minded clientele about alternative jewelry practices, habitually common in other cultures but alien to most Americans. One exception, she believes, was assemblage artist Robert Ebendorf who, in Schneier's estimation, participated in the "jewelry revolution" occurring at that time in England, Germany, and the Netherlands.

To Schneier, Otto Künzli (Switzerland)—who began experimenting with reflective practices in 1976—is the "father" of contemporary jewelry. Both as a maker and influential teacher at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste München (Academy of Fine Arts, Munich), he has consistently encouraged students, wearers, and viewers to "think" about jewelry. Schneier recalls that her original training in art history made Künzli's conceptual approach particularly appealing and remains compatible with her own theory of contemporary jewelry. Her MAD collection boasts some of Künzli's groundbreaking works, including a bracelet and ring—*Gold Makes Blind* and *Ring for Two*—both from 1980, along with *NR 32040* (1982), one of his brooches made from wallpaper and polystyrene. Due to Schneier's penchant for *Gold Makes Blind*, she included a version in her gift to the Metropolitan Museum, as well.

Ironically, by the 1990s, contemporary jewelry's parameters were expanding to include precious metals among its roster of

THOMAS GENTILLE
Brooch, ca. 2000
wood, eggshell
4 ¾ x 2 ¾"
COLLECTION THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART; GIFT OF DONNA SCHNEIER

Mary Lee Hu
Choker #70, 1985
18k and 22k gold
6 x 9 x 3"
COLLECTION THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART; GIFT OF DONNA SCHNEIER

acceptable materials; consequently, Schneier began addressing, what she terms, more "wearable" pieces, such as the gold work being done in Italy by Giampaolo Babetto and Jacqueline Ryan. Acquisitions such as these, however, did not compromise her passion for the more radical formats, and after MAD took possession of its gift, she found that she missed certain cutting-edge examples by Künzli, Ebendorf, Peter Chang (England), and Gijs Bakker (the Netherlands), leading her to replace them in her personal collection.

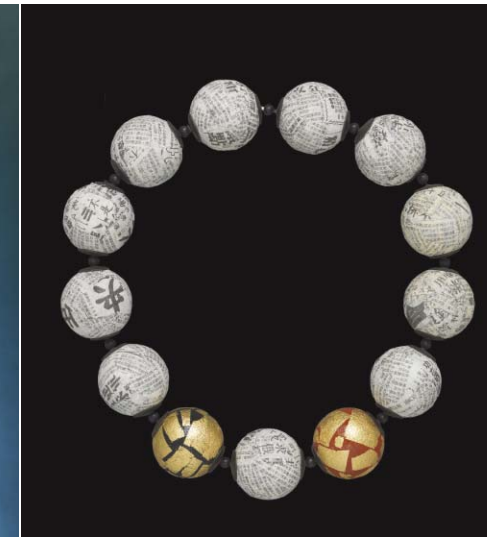
The importance of Donna Schneier's gift of contemporary jewelry to the Metropolitan Museum—celebrated with a dedicated exhibition and accompanying catalogue in spring 2014—cannot be overstated. Although the museum already owns works by makers such as Ebendorf, Thomas Gentille (USA), William Harper (USA), Jamie Bennett (USA), and Pavel Opočenský (Czech Republic), it is the first time a contemporary jewelry show of such magnitude will be mounted at this venerable American institution. The Metropolitan Museum as a whole is encyclopedic, with attendance among the highest in the world. In 2012 it ranked as the second most-visited museum, exceeded only by the Louvre in Paris. Consequently, the opportunity to introduce contemporary jewelry to a vast international audience is inestimable.

Schneier's gift to the Museum numbers more than 130 pieces spanning some 45 years. Consummate masters such as Hermann Jünger (Germany), Peter Skubic (Austria), Ruudt Peters (the Netherlands), and Bruno Martinazzi (Italy) merge flawlessly with more immediate notables including Helen Britton (Australia), David Bielander (Switzerland), Giovanni Corvaja (Italy), and Lola Brooks (USA). Deans like Yasuki Hiramatsu (born 1926 in Japan) and Dorothea Prühl (born 1937 in Poland) harmonize with rising stars such as Attai Chen (Israel), Melanie Bilenker (USA), and Alexander Blank (Germany), each born in the mid–late 1970s. The collection even contains some surprises, such as glazed ceramic necklaces by iconic sculptor Beatrice Wood (USA) and polyurethane resin bracelets by famed designer Gaetano Pesce (Italy).

Considering her two most substantial museum donations, Schneier emerges as an avid collector who, with very little overlap, has spread her copious holdings in a truly ecumenical manner. Although the MAD and Metropolitan Museum acquisitions might appear dissimilar, they indeed share Schneier's prime thematic consideration for medium, method, and meaning. The two groups taken together chart an art form's evolution through the passion of one savvy collector. Although she may currently prefer to wear less provocative pieces, philosophically, Schneier will always embrace the vanguard. Thomas Gentille is the exemplar of her taste, with nine pieces in the Metropolitan Museum collection. An artist whose skillfully fabricated works include pins, armlets, and necklaces that astonish with labor-intensive inlays, subtly textured metals, or painstakingly painted woods, he welcomes any and all substances suited to his structure, composition, and intent. Recipient of the Preis Herbert Hofmann (Herbert Hofmann Prize) and designated a "Klassiker der Moderne" (Modern Classic) at *Schmuck* in Munich (2001)—where he was the first American to be so honored—as well as being awarded the Bayerischer Staatspreis (Bavarian State Prize, 2004), Gentille regards Schneier as a devoted and uncompromising force within the contemporary jewelry community who wished to make a special gift to the city of New York.

No collection that seeks to encompass such a broad and ever-changing domain as contemporary jewelry can be conclusive on its own, but studied together, Schneier's two-pronged gift tells the story of contemporary jewelry from the last quarter of the twentieth century through the first decade of the twenty-first with eloquence.

Toni Greenbaum is a Brooklyn-based art historian specializing in twentieth- and twenty-first-century jewelry and metalwork.



CAROLINE BROADHEAD
Necklace/ Veil, 1983
nylon
PHOTO: DAVID WARD

ROBERT W. EBENDORF
Untitled (necklace), 1985
Chinese newspaper,
gold foil, hammered end caps,
ebony beads, rubber
12 x 12 x 2"
COLLECTION MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN; GIFT OF DONNA SCHNEIER
PHOTO: JOHN BIGELOW TAYLOR

On the Verge

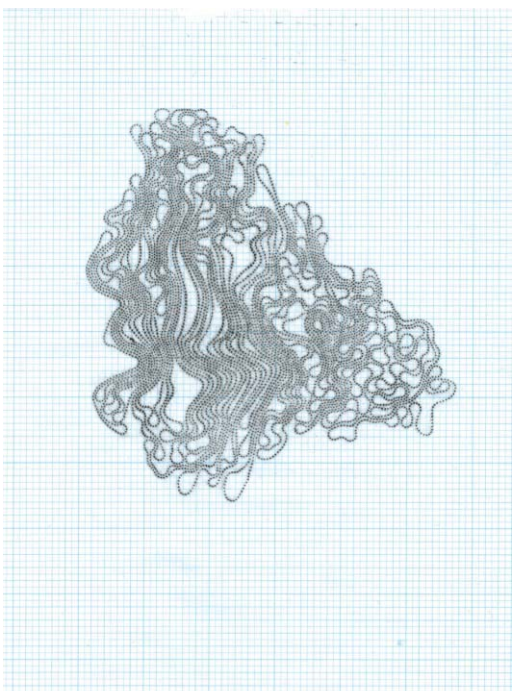
BY JONATHAN WAHL

I HAVE ALWAYS been interested in work that crosses or blurs the lines between the art world and the craft world. I live and work in New York City, a notoriously "un-craft" town, so I am excited when I see work that flirts with these boundaries; craft/art, fashion/craft, metalsmithed/sculpted. Lucy Joyce adorns a building as if it were a person. Jean-Michel Othoniel creates giant beaded objects. David Wiseman produces sculptural light fixtures that could be jewelry if on another scale. Stephanie Syjuco portrays ceramic vessels that are two-dimensional. Christopher Cook uses metal like a canvas, Klaus Burgel's brooches could be gestures from abstract paintings, and Kristi Sword's chain rubbings allow the metal to make its own drawings. In some way or another, each of the artists I am "LOOK"ing at here tickle the verge of a boundary.

Jonathan Wahl is an artist and directs the Jewelry Center at the 92nd Street Y in New York City.

KLAUS BURGEL
Brooch #8, 2013
silver
3 ¼ x 2 ¾"
COURTESY GALLERY LOUPE; PHOTO: MARK JOHNSTON

KRISTI SWORD
Rubbing 16, 2013
graphite on grid paper
8 ½ x 11"



LUCY JOYCE
Possibility for the Thames, 2013
film still

CHRISTOPHER COOK
Threefold, 2012
graphite, oil, resin on
coated aluminum
COURTESY RYAN LEE, NEW YORK

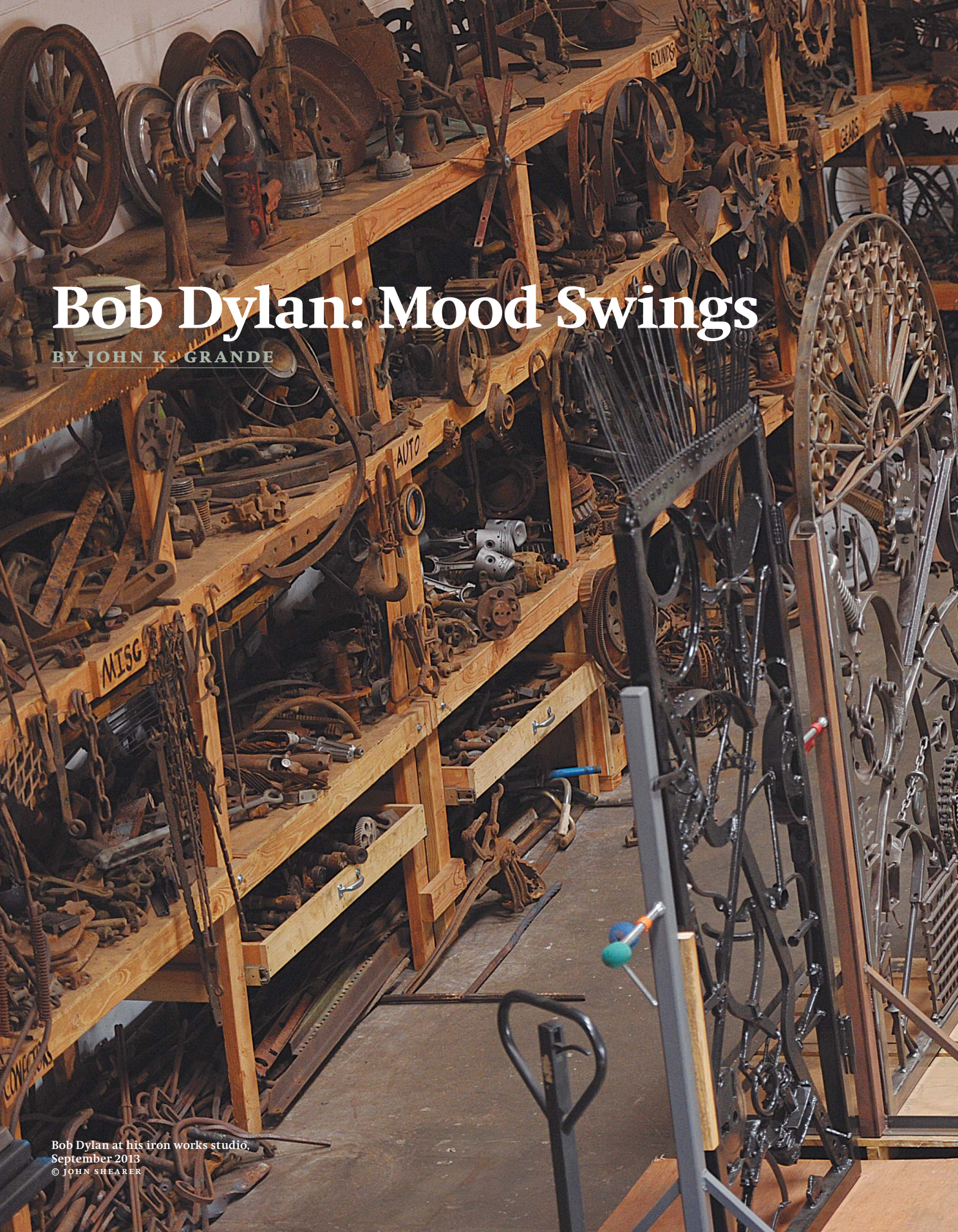
DAVID WISEMAN
"Collage" Illuminated Sculpture, 2008
bronze, porcelain, crystal, steel
45 x 60"

STEPHANIE SYJUCO
RAIDERS: International Booty, Bountiful Harvest (Selections from the Collection of the A____ A__ M_____), 2011
installation view (detail)

JEAN-MICHEL OTHONIEL
Great Self-Supported Knot, 2011
mirrored glass, stainless steel
114 1/8 x 98 3/8 x 55 1/8"
COURTESY GALERIE PERROTIN;
PHOTO: GUILLAUME ZICCARELLI

Bob Dylan: Mood Swings

BY JOHN K. GRANDE



Bob Dylan at his iron works studio, September 2013
© JOHN SHEARER

PLOW
PARTS
LONGS

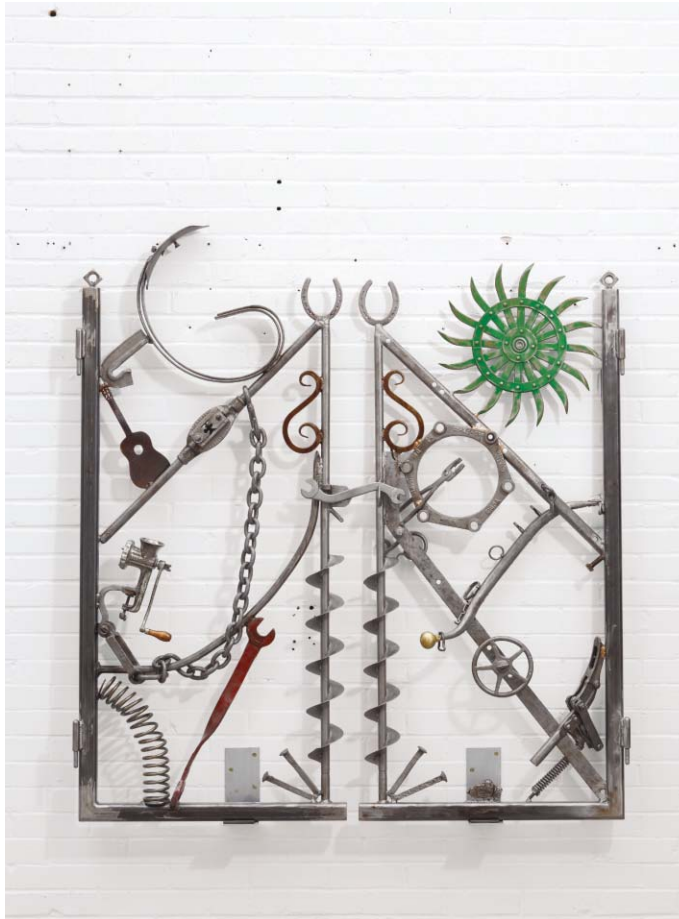
Untitled I (Gate), 2013
welded iron objects
97 ¼ x 48 x 7 ⅞"
© BOB DYLAN/HALCYON GALLERY

My dreams are made of iron and steel
With a big bouquet
Of roses hanging down
From the heavens to the ground.
—BOB DYLAN, "NEVER SAY GOODBYE" (1974)

WHAT BRINGS A songwriter, one of the most popular alive, from music to sculpture? In his autobiography *Chronicles*, Bob Dylan talks about renting a third-floor walk up at West 4th Street in Manhattan for $60. A month. He describes the tiny place:

> *There was barely room enough for one person and the heat went off after dark and the place had to be heated by keeping both gas burners up full blast. It came empty. Quickly after moving in I built some furniture for the place. With some borrowed tools I made a couple of tables, one which doubled as a desk, I also put together a cabinet and a bed frame. . . . with hacksaws, cold chisels and screwdrivers—even made a couple of mirrors using an old technique I learned in a high school shop woodworking class using plates of glass, mercury and tin foil. Besides playing music I liked doing those kinds of things.*[1]

There is something no nonsense, plainspoken about Bob Dylan, whether in his lyrics, in his biography, or in his speech. It relates to earlier American history and literature, such as Stephen Hart Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*. Crane was recommended as a writer to Dylan by poet Archibald MacLeish, an American writer of an earlier generation, the same generation as folk legend Woodie Guthrie who so inspired Dylan, that he would visit him in the hospital. And that same plainspokenness helps to explain the accessible materials in Dylan's sculpture, his choice to recycle, to use what is present. As in his lyrics, the materials are always at hand. Reality is Dylan's source and creative medium. Indeed, it is actual experience that shapes the song and the sculpture—the limitations as well as the possibilities. And yet Dylan's sculptural work is criticized for that very same reason, because it is so direct and unencumbered by concepts.



Untitled II (Gate), 2013
welded iron objects
67 ⅜ x 61 ½ x 10 ¼"
© BOB DYLAN/HALCYON GALLERY

Untitled III (Gate), 2013
welded iron objects
89 ¼ x 36 x 5 ⅞"
© BOB DYLAN/HALCYON GALLERY

Perhaps this lack of regard reveals the moral bankruptcy of the high art world that celebrates concept over matter and spirit. Dylan's "Gates" series, exhibited in late 2013 at London's Halcyon Gallery, are far from high art. These works challenge us all to look a little closer at the real world for our inspiration and poetry. And Dylan is always inviting us to express, to feel what we feel, even if it is all wrong, or at least not quite right. While such forthrightness may not resonate in the contemporary art world, it has earned him France's prestigious Légion d'honneur in 2013, and back home he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2012.

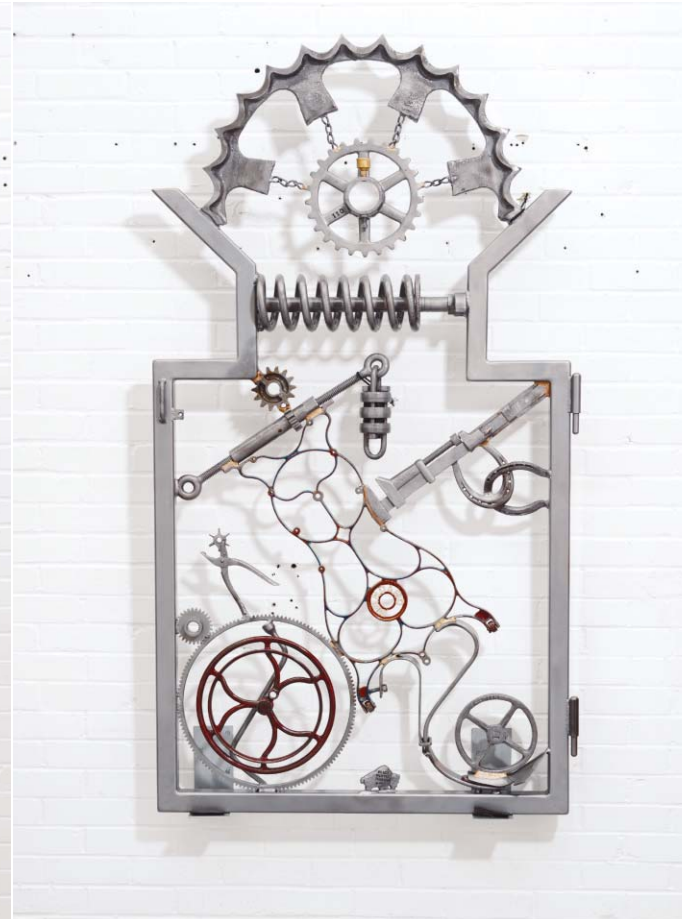
For his show at the Halcyon, Dylan explained that "Gates appeal to me because of the negative space they allow. . . . They can shut you out or shut you in. And in some ways there is no difference."[2] Dylan's gates are marked by both strong structure and detailing. Like his music, the "Gates" also emphasize texture, with bronze weld marks that are left unhidden. You may see a fragment of a lawn mower, a dog motif in metal, cogs and wheels, but they are given a certain dignity. Not about concepts, they are more like memory maps of the experience of the everyday. This is what Dylan's work with metal seems to suggest. That design is a pragmatic response to availability. What is there is what you use.

These works challenge us all to look a little closer at the real world for our inspiration and poetry.

Selecting the elements to include, weld, attach, compose, is like writing. Instead of words, there are car parts, meat grinders, agriculture tools. *Untitled I* (2012–13) is an entrance without doors. A metal silhouette of a bird rests welded on top of a thick chain. At Dylan's sculpture studio in Los Angeles, old parts and iron elements are stored in quantity, like a large-scale box by American artist Joseph Cornell, trying to catch the past and reconfigure it into sculpture. A distant echo of John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* is also detectable, with the struggle of man-and-machine and the Great Depression.

In *Untitled II* (2012–13), the doors are shut. You can never enter here, and the wrench that speaks of this "closure" has been bent and twisted out of shape. It's a not-so-subtle social

Untitled IV (Gate), 2013
welded iron objects
90 1/8 x 51 1/8 x 11 3/8"
© BOB DYLAN/HALCYON GALLERY



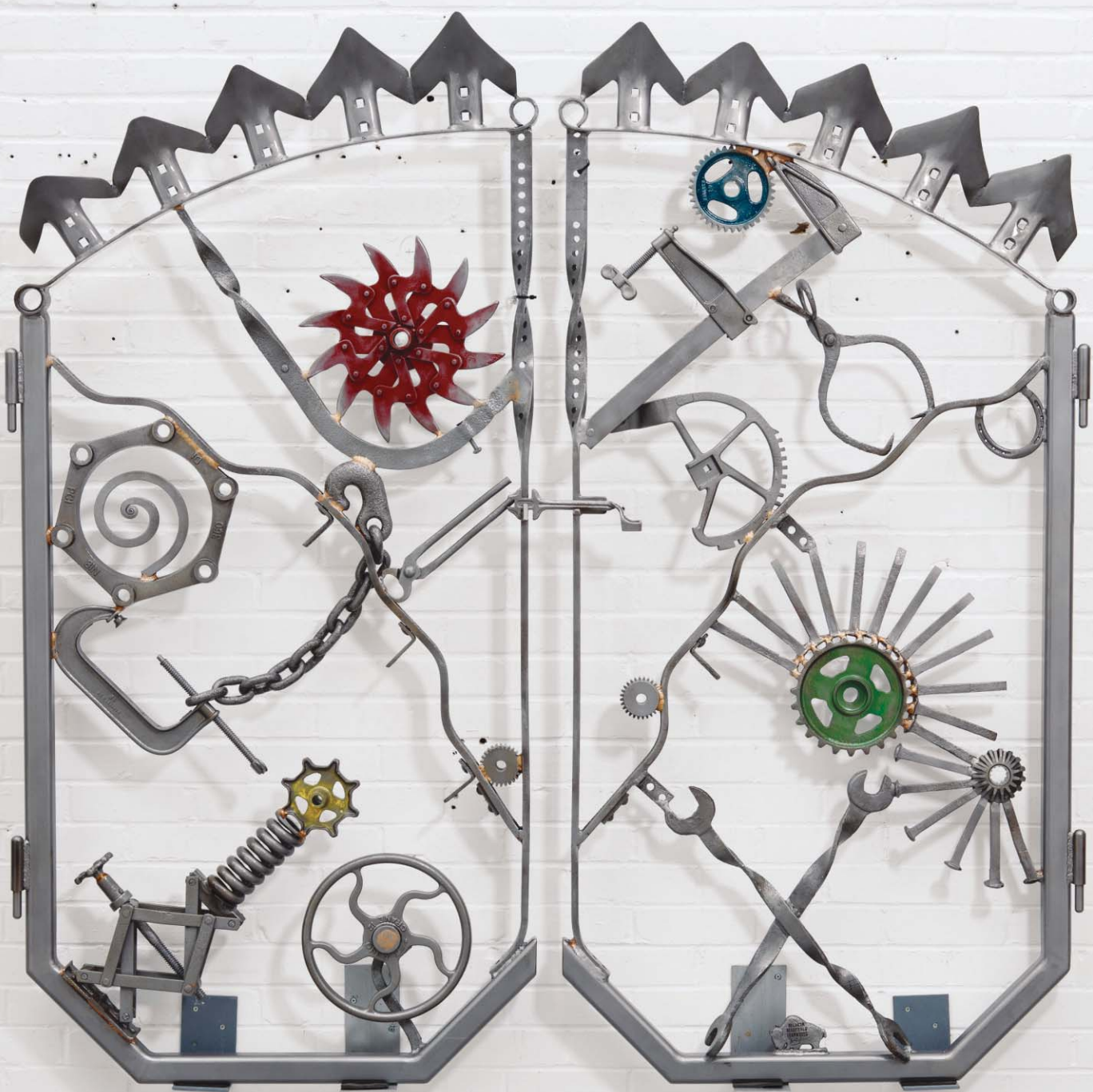
Untitled V (Gate), 2013
welded iron objects
46 7/8 x 41 x 6"
© BOB DYLAN/HALCYON GALLERY

comment. Likewise large nails symbolize something forbidden, and a separation between two facets of society, something unspoken, but always present in Western culture. What is surprising is the simple symmetry, the logic of the cogs, rods, and wheels. They are structurally sound and well built with fragments taken from the book of the everyday. Like the work of sculptor Ed Kienholz (1927–1994), there is a manifest desire to seize on mundane material in order to bring art closer to life. While critics have called these works ordinary and lacking bite, it is this natural language that renders them accessible to a public, without rhetoric, even that of Dylan's own youth. In *Chronicles* he explains that this rhetoric became so confused, so misunderstood by people on both sides of debates about war, poverty, environment.

"I was born and raised in the iron ore country—where you could breathe it and smell it every day."

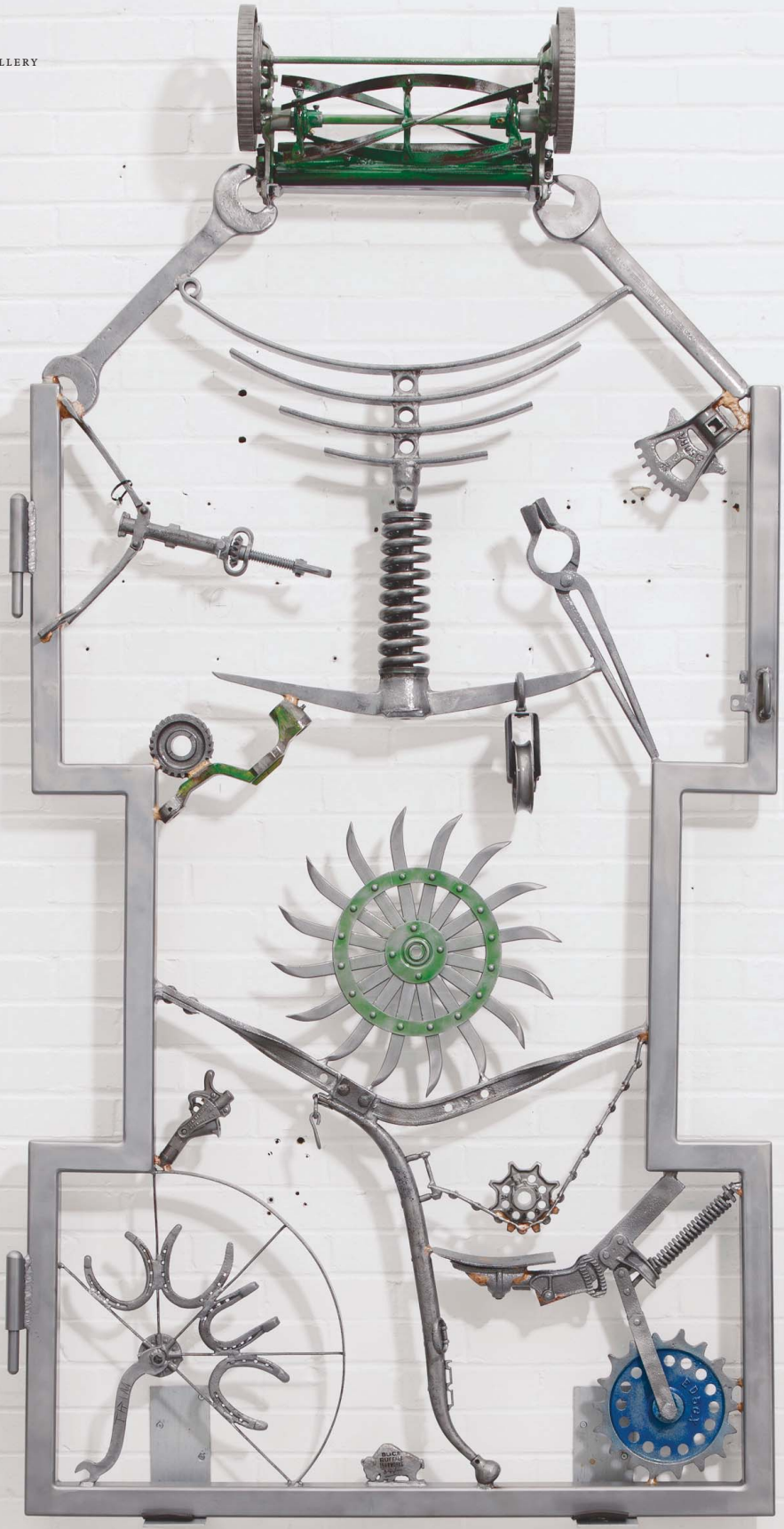
Dylan spent his youth in Hibbing, Minnesota, an area with a long history of iron mining. As early as 1978, Dylan told the *Minnesota Times* that when he returned to his home state: "I like to blast sculpture out of metal." He recalled that he'd "been around metal all my life ever since I was a kid. I was born and raised in the iron ore country—where you could breathe it and smell it every day. And I've always worked with it in one form or another." His interest in art included studies with a New York painter during his Greenwich Village days, a time when he visited the museums to discover art from the past. Dylan's paintings first came to public attention with the covers of his albums *Music from Big Pink* (1968) and *Self-Portrait* (1970). In 1968, on his twenty-seventh birthday in Woodstock, New York, he got a set of paints from his wife Sara and began to paint—quietly (no advertising). More recently, in 2007, he exhibited the "Drawn Blank Series" of paintings in Chemnitz, Germany. The recent "Brazil Series" (2010) manifests a social character, revealing the underbelly of society and corruption.

Dylan's sculpture, on the other hand, displays an entirely different quality than the painting. It has an immediacy that is pragmatic and lighter in spirit. The eight "Gates" in his



Untitled VI (Gate), 2013
welded iron objects
74 x 71 5/8 x 6"
© BOB DYLAN/HALCYON GALLERY

Untitled VII (Gate), 2013
welded iron objects
98 ½ x 72 ¼ x 6"
© BOB DYLAN/HALCYON GALLERY



Untitled VIII (Gate), 2013
welded iron objects
107 ½ x 63 x 6 ¾"
© BOB DYLAN/HALCYON GALLERY

recent exhibition are nowhere near Auguste Rodin's *Gates of Hell*, a project that continued for thirty-seven years until the sculptor's death. Nor are they close to "The Gates of Eden," a Dylan song of 1965 full of Biblical references. These "Gates" speak of the American industrial era with a direct language. They are a defense of the working class, the unions, the spirit of the people who made America, with axes recalling the pioneers of early American life. These are gates that engage the scale of the human body and provide a place in relation to potential transformation, serving as spaces we can move through. They suggest expectancy, seclusion, protection, or incarceration like that of Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, who, after a long imprisonment, was freed, partly due to a song Dylan co-wrote in 1975 with Jacques Levy about this confinement.

These "Gates" speak of the American industrial era with a direct language.

In addition to the gates, Dylan's London exhibition included sculptures on various other themes. Dylan's "Gangster Doors," for example, are battered doors of American cars from the 1920s. Some have bullet holes in them, and each has a poster of a notorious American gangster, like Al Capone, next to it. There are table sculptures too, and small sculpted bronze guitars and treble clefs, a slightly tongue-in-cheek allusion to Dylan's other craft.

Bob Dylan's metal sculptures are not nostalgic. Art, Dylan once said, should "Hold that time, breathe in that time, and stop time."[3] Part poetry, part real, Bob Dylan's "Gates," like all his metal sculpture, speak of faith, hope, the times he lives in, and above all, the never-ending struggle that is for, with, and of life itself.

John K. Grande is an author and curator based in Montreal, Canada.

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1. Bob Dylan, *Chronicles, Volume One* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), pp. 267–68.
2. Gallery brochure, Halcyon Gallery, London, England, 2013.
3. Bob Dylan, interviewed by Jonathan Cott, *Rolling Stone*, January 26, 1978; reprinted in Jonathan Cott, ed., *Bob Dylan: The Essential Interviews* (New York: Wenner Books 2006), p. 192.

Terms of Engagement
A History of Betrothal and Wedding Rings

BY JACK OGDEN

Fig. 4
German
Wedding Ring, ca. 1600–1650
(assembled and disassembled)
gold, enamel, diamonds
COLLECTION OF VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON, M.224–1975

Fig. 1
Roman
Intaglio Ring, 3rd century AD
gold, onyx
inscribed OMONOIA ('harmony')
PHOTO: JACK OGDEN; COURTESY CHRISTIES, LONDON

THE ASSOCIATION OF rings with marriage is nothing new; indeed the practice has a history going back at least two millennia. A look back at this past reveals an evolution of both iconography and construction. Some two thousand years ago, in ancient Rome, there was just the betrothal, when a man "contracted" to marry a woman. This commitment had a legal status under Roman law, and the giving of a betrothal ring was part of this contract. Emperor Constantine the Great noted in the 4th century that the exchange of a ring plus a kiss were sufficient to demonstrate a couple's intent to marry. The act of giving a ring to an intended spouse is also documented in a letter that has survived from Roman Egypt, which accompanied the ring when it was sent to the woman's guardian. More flippantly, in a poem by the ever-cheeky Roman poet Ovid, a man speaks to the betrothal ring en route to his beloved saying: "I wish you a warm welcome and immediate installation behind her second knuckle, fit her as snugly as she fits me." Surviving Roman rings that show clasped hands, the inscription "*omonoia*" (harmony), or both, are believed to have been betrothal rings. Such rings are not uncommon from the third and fourth centuries and survive from Britain to Syria and Egypt, all corners of the Roman Empire. The majority of these surviving rings are in gold, showing that even in ancient times the commitment to marriage could be costly (Fig. 1).

After Christianity gained a hold in the Roman Empire, the intercession of a priest to bless the union became the norm. In the 4th century, Augustine of Hippo (St. Augustine) said that a priest should not hesitate to wed a couple even if they were too poor to give rings to each other. It is interesting that he says "to each other." Sadly, I know of no men's rings of the period that can be positively identified as wedding rings, nor do other documents refer to this practice. Around the same time, women's betrothal rings showing clasped hands began to be superseded by rings depicting the couple themselves. Some feature just two heads, clearly male and female, while others show standing figures. The names of the couple were often added, typically with a cross or depiction of Christ

Women's betrothal rings showing clasped hands began to be superseded by rings depicting the couple themselves.

above them. An unusual early example (Fig. 2), with standing figures of the man and woman, probably dates to the late 4th or 5th century. It is made from sturdy gold sheet; the hoop is hollow, and the sheet that runs around the interior is connected at the back by a slotted soldered join. This type of slotted join was popular in Medieval times, being meticulously described by the German monk Theophilus who wrote a book on goldsmithing around 1100. Most Roman rings assembled from sheet gold have a simpler overlap join at the back.

To what extent ancient gem-rings were used for betrothal in Classical times is unclear. Some Hellenistic Greek gold or garnet-set rings from 3rd to 1st century BC depicting Eros, the god of love, were perhaps betrothal rings. From an amazing hoard of Roman jewelry dating to around AD 300 and found at Beaurains in France, there is an aquamarine ring with the names "Valerianus" and "Paterna" engraved on the gold hoop, presumably the names of a married couple.

In the 9th century, Pope Nicholas acknowledged the two stages establishing a marriage: the betrothal, which was the secular, legal "contract," and the subsequent wedding that was the religious blessing performed by a priest. In the betrothal, the bridegroom placed a ring on his fiancée's finger. However, even Pope Nicholas had to admit that the religious wedding ceremony that followed was not obligatory since, under Roman law, the betrothal "contract" was legally sufficient to establish the state of matrimony. Pope Innocent III, in the early 1200s, may have been the first to say that a marriage had to be solemnized in a church. The clear separation between betrothal and wedding is the origin of the separate rings— for engagement and wedding— which are usual today. However, there is little evidence for two rings being used until quite recently.

Medieval and early Renaissance painting and manuscript illustration frequently show the exchange of rings, sometimes with family or a notary present to witness the betrothal, other times in church where the wedding is being blessed by a priest. A popular type of Medieval betrothal or wedding ring in the 1400 and 1500s took the form of two clasped hands, reminiscent of the ancient Roman type and perhaps derived from it. Surviving silver examples are not uncommon (Fig. 3). Other all-metal rings also carry inscriptions or depictions that identify them as connected with a marriage. However, representations of betrothals or weddings often seem to show a gem-set ring. The clasped-hand type of ring has continued in use to the present day, and by the 1600s some of these the rings were actually composed of two or three interlinked bands. We now also begin to find rings where the two hands are not clasped, but hold a heart, typically set with a diamond (Fig. 4). The interlinked or "gimmel" rings can be in two or three parts, and although not particularly difficult to align and place on the finger on a daily basis, they must have been a nightmare for a nervous bridegroom in Church—and certainly complex for the jeweler to make.

Bring on the Band

The relatively plain gold-band wedding ring has been used in Europe since at least the 1400s. While such gold bands predate this period, there is no way to know whether they were connected with marriage. With European bands, right up to the present day, we know their function because wedding rings are so often engraved with a suitably loving or sentimental inscription. These few well-chosen words were called the "posy," and today such rings are often referred to as "posy rings." Their function and terminology are well documented. For example, a list of jewelry stolen in 1685 included "One Wedding Ring, the Poesie 'God above increase

Fig. 2
Late Roman-early Byzantine
Ring, 4th-5th century AD
gold
PHOTO: JACK OGDEN; COURTESY ARIADNE GALLERY, NEW YORK

Fig. 3
Italian
Wedding Betrothal Ring, 15th century
silver
COLLECTION OF VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON, 848–1871

our Love'." Records such as this help in dating these rings, because although some are dated, most are not.

The posies themselves are varied. Sentimental terms of endearment or professions of undying love abound—"May we love forever," "Two bodies and one heart," "Faithful ever, deceitful never," "Joy without end" and "I will be yours while breath endures," among others. These are typically of the 1600s. A ring from a century earlier has the rather charming inscription "my wordely ioye [joy] alle my trust hert thought lyfe and lust." (Fig. 5) Some "poesies" seem distinctly odd for a romantic gesture. What can one make of "Tis fit no man should be alone which made Tom to marry Joan" or "More faithful than fortunate." I'm all for honesty in relationships, but would a woman really cherish a ring inscribed "Thou wert not handsome, wise, but rich: Twas that which did my eyes bewitch." Were these really wedding rings? Even though the examples quoted were all collected more than a century ago, are they all authentic? Old wedding rings, like any other collectible, have been known to be faked, and supply will always meet demand.

Today, of course, engagement rings are frequently equated with diamonds, typically diamond solitaires.

With gold bands engraved on the inside, a question about construction arises. Engraving around the outside of the hoop was simple enough, but engraving the inside of a hoop, which became commoner over time, provided certain challenges. It is not surprising to find that in some cases a flat D-section strip of wire was engraved and then bent into a hoop and soldered closed. It wasn't always done this way. I recently saw a ring in which the wire had been stamped with a hallmark, then bent into a hoop, soldered closed, and finally engraved on the inside. This ring dated to the 1600s. Often posy rings had no solder joins at all. Instead each ring was made from a small round piece of gold (a melted gold coin was usual), which was pierced in the center and then carefully hammered out to the required diameter hoop.

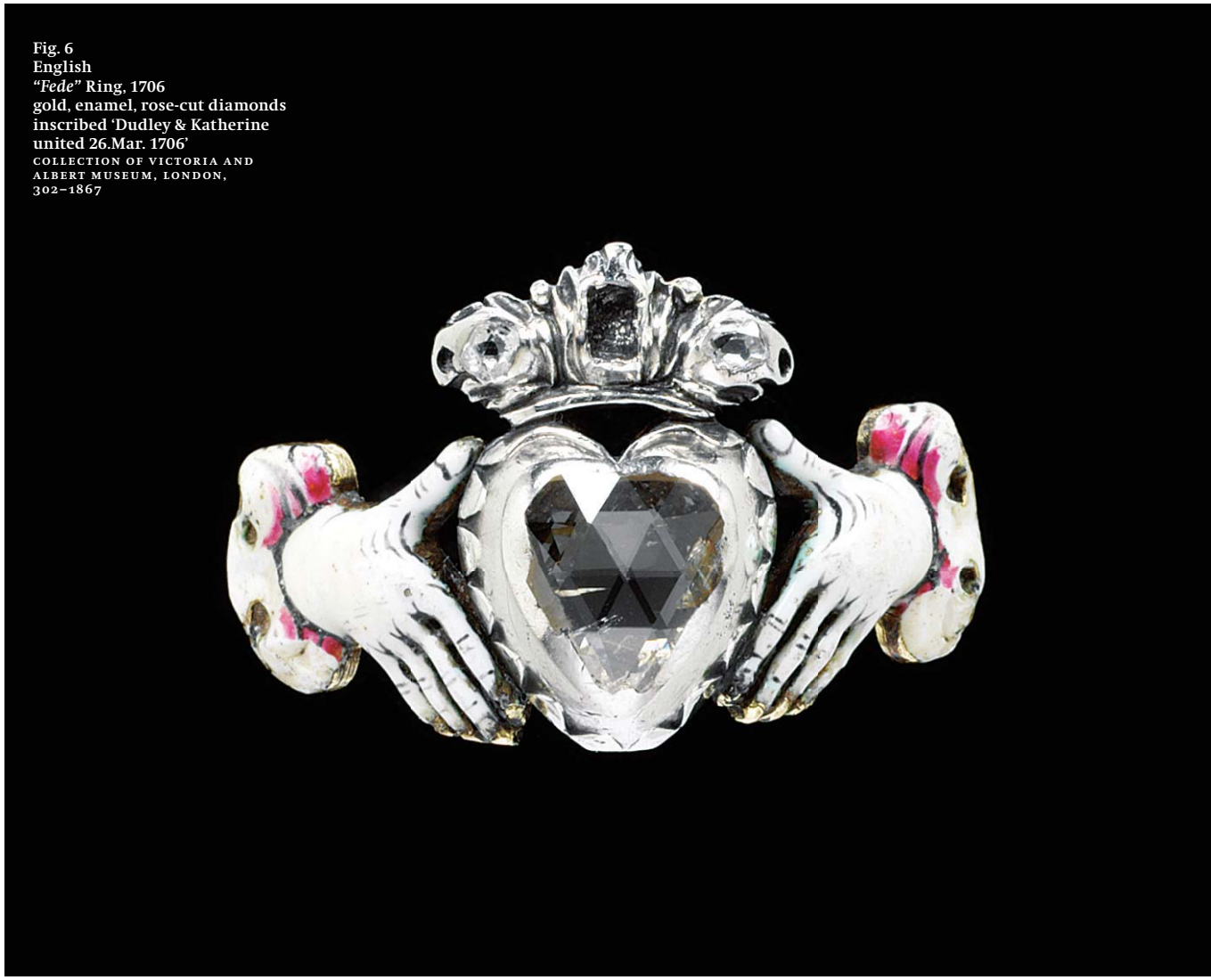


Fig. 6
English
"Fede" Ring, 1706
gold, enamel, rose-cut diamonds
inscribed 'Dudley & Katherine
united 26.Mar. 1706'
COLLECTION OF VICTORIA AND
ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON,
302–1867

Sparkle

Today, of course, engagement rings are frequently equated with diamonds, typically diamond solitaires. The history of this practice predates De Beers' marketing genius by some five hundred years. A little diamond ring found in the tomb of a teenage girl near Rome dates to the mid- to late 100s. This simple gold ring with an uncut diamond crystal is the earliest diamond ring known from Europe. Although it is tempting to associate it with a betrothal ring, there is no evidence that this was its purpose. Indeed it isn't until some 1,300 years later that there is a clear connection between marriage and a diamond ring. The earliest example usually cited is a ring with diamonds set in the form of the letter M and originally owned by Mary of Burgundy (1457–1482). However there is no actual proof that this was her wedding ring, although diamonds certainly played a part when she married Maximilian I of Austria in 1477. Under her father's instructions, the young Mary had sent a letter to Maximilian's father promising that she would marry his son, and she writes that her father had enclosed a diamond ring "of considerable value" as a sign of sincerity.

The correlation of a diamond ring with a father's insistence of his daughter's arranged marriage is not exactly the romantic notion we'd like to associate with diamonds! However, in 1475, just two years before Maximilian and Mary were married, the wedding of Constanzo Sforza and Camilla D'Aragona, from two of the most noble families in Italy, took place. A poem celebrating this union includes the words, "Two wills, two hearts, two passions are bonded in marriage by a diamond." An accompanying drawing shows a diamond ring encircling two burning torches and an attendant figure identified as Hymenaeus, the old Greek god of wedding ceremonies. Hymenaeus wears a robe embroidered with diamond rings and flames.

It is not until the 1600s that we begin to see more evidence of diamond rings associated with marriage, both with surviving examples (Fig. 6) and rings mentioned in literature. In a romantic short story titled "The Two Damsels" (1613) by

Fig. 5
English
Posie Ring, ca 1500-1530
gold
inscribed 'my.wordely ioye alle.
my.trust hert.thought.lyfe.and.lust'
COLLECTION OF VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON, 895–1871

Miguel de Cervantes, a diamond ring is described as being engraved with the words, "Marco Antonio is the husband of Theodosia." A half century later, in a play titled *The Forced Marriage* (1664) Molière refers to a man's desire to buy a diamond ring for his intended spouse. And it wasn't always the man as donor; in a short story of 1701 by Pierre-Antoine Le Motteux, a woman gives a diamond ring to a man as a pledge of love when they promised to marry each other. A diamond ring from the same time (Fig. 6) is inscribed "Dudley & Katherine united 26. Mar. 1706." As the 1700s progress, mentions of diamond-set betrothal or wedding rings become increasingly common; and from 1760 we have a French comment that many marriages were prevented because the groom couldn't afford a diamond ring for his bride.

Engaging

The first use of the term "engagement ring" that I am aware of dates from 1812 in England where such a ring was not always set with a diamond. By the mid-1800s in the United States, however, a diamond solitaire had become established as the most suitable engagement ring. The pronged setting—now often associated with Tiffany & Co.—was in use by the 1870s, sometimes even with platinum claws to best set off the diamond (Fig. 7). For many men, the diamond engagement ring is a very significant expenditure. Recently, the global financial pecking order was summed up by the diamond cartel De Beers: In the United States, a man was expected to pay the equivalent of two months' salary for the ring; in the United Kingdom it was one month's salary; in Japan, three months'. In 1887, an American book on etiquette recommended that "As for the engagement ring, modern fashion prescribes a diamond solitaire, which may range in price from two hundred and fifty to two thousand dollars."

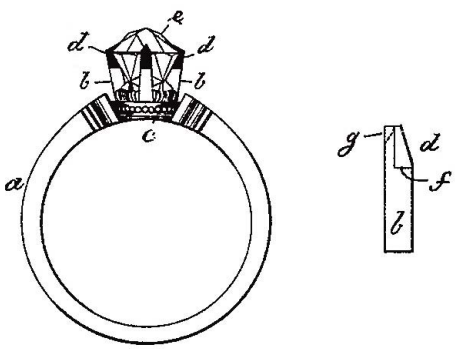


Fig. 7
William Bates of Boston
Drawing from US Patent #202402, 1878
The gold prongs (b) have an inner tip of platinum (d); "such points, nearly approximating the color of the diamond, seem to lose themselves in the reflection of the stone"

Disengaging

And what if it all goes wrong? Many heated courtroom exchanges in recent years have centered on who gets to keep that solitaire after the divorce or after the engagement is broken off. In legal terms, it depends on whether the ring is seen as an outright gift or a gift in the expectation of marriage. This essay is not the place to get bogged down in legalities, other than to note that this is not a new debate. In a US case in the 1880s, Albert Smith was jilted by Nellie Stuart, and when she refused to return his ring to him, he took her to court. The trial decided in Nellie's favor. A quaint period touch was provided by Albert's mother trying to get paid to offset the cost of "gas and coal used in the courting." Just a few years earlier, there had been a Breach-of-Promise case in the UK. A man had presented a woman with a ring. When the wedding never happened, he wanted his ring back. It was said that although she had not formally promised to marry the man, "the ring was considered to be an engagement ring, because it was a diamond."

Finger Food for Thought

Today the third finger (fourth if you count the thumb) is that reserved for the wedding and engagement rings. In America, the left hand is usual, while in some parts of the world it is the right. Sometimes the engagement ring is worn on the right hand until after the wedding. This special function of the third finger—designated "the ring finger"—is an ancient tradition. According to various Classical writers, the practice derived from a belief of the ancient Egyptians that there was a nerve linking this finger with the heart, which then as now was thought of as the seat of emotions. Anatomically such a link is somewhat questionable, but it has resulted in a tradition that, like the idea of a betrothal ring itself, has survived more than two thousands years. A lasting marriage, you could say.

Jack Ogden is a jewelry historian, author, and consultant, specializing in the development of jewelry materials and techniques.

Bunches of Pink (necklace), 2012
sterling silver, plastic
length 25"
PHOTO: DIRK EISEL

Helen Britton
Narratives of Creation

BY ANDREA DINOTO

Pinkorange (brooch), 2012
sterling silver, glass, paint
3 ⅜ x 2 ⅜ x 1 ⅛"
PHOTO: HELEN BRITTON

Bird (brooch), 2007
sterling silver, diamonds, glass
2 ⅜ x 1 ½ x ¾"
PHOTO: HELEN BRITTON

Antler Landscape (brooch), 2009
sterling silver, paint, glass
3 ½ x 2 ½ x 1 ⅜"
PHOTO: HELEN BRITTON

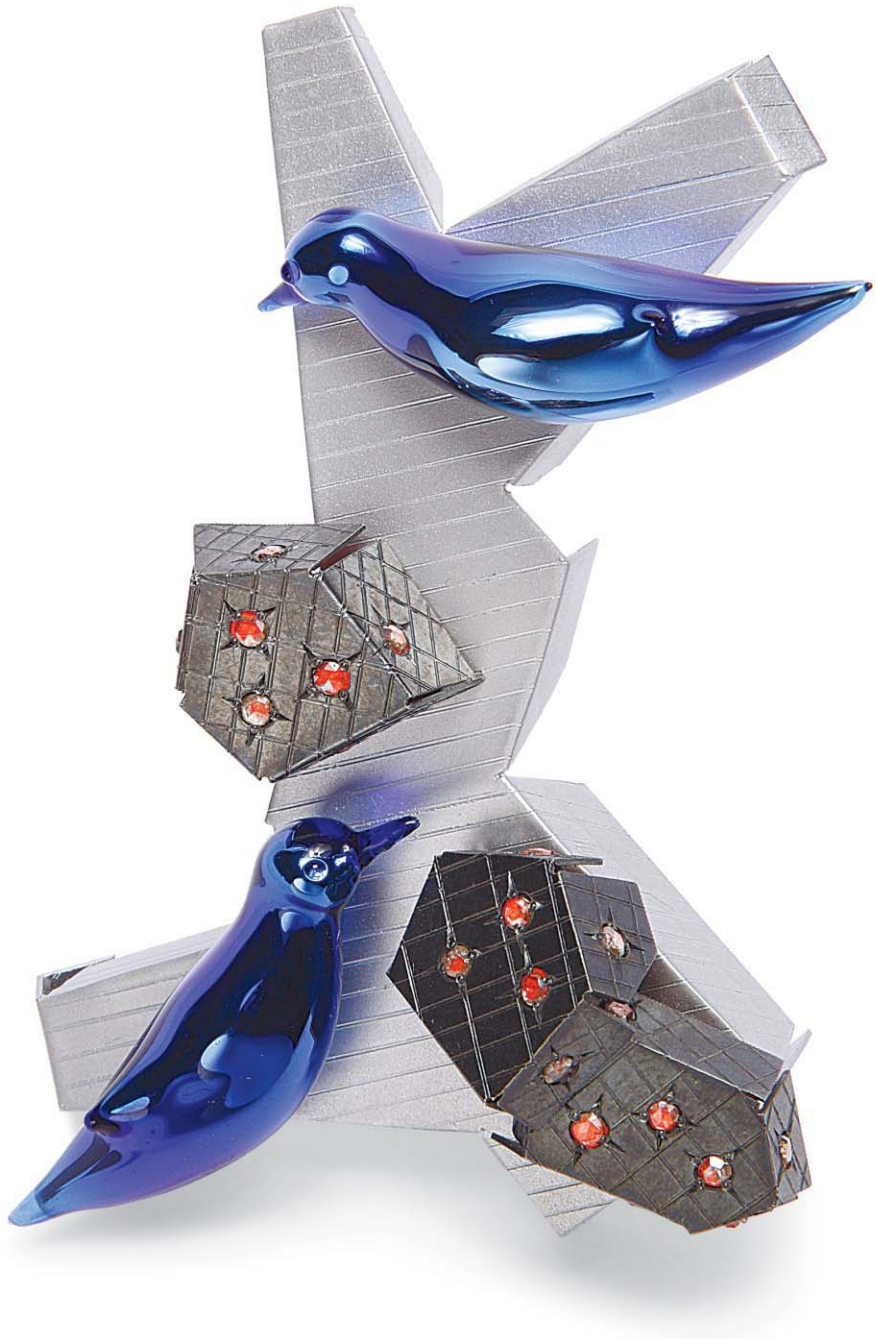
HELEN BRITTON, THE Australian-born jeweler, photographer, writer, and collector, is eloquent in each of her talents and obsessions. Invariably, her own words are the best guide to her work. "Making jewelry," she says, "I play out tensions and beautiful collisions in a small complex space, building miniature theatrical landscapes and emotional responses to the material world." Britton's materials are drawn from many sources, notably her treasured collection of junk jewelry components, which she documents through drawings and incorporates into colorful, complex constructions—each a "little machine or landscape for wearing."[1] For Britton, ornamentation "is a form of desire, a sign of pleasure, and a solidifying of the flow of material excess."[2] She stresses that that the components she uses were always intended for jewelry, some of them for high-end costume jewelry, as well as for mass production. "I like to think of them," she says, "in terms of their specific material and production histories: Who thought them up, where were they produced, out of what and under what circumstances, and for whom."

Britton's work—or "practice," as she refers to her creative process—is in large measure a meditation on the material worlds she inhabits and experiences as an artist. Her designs for jewelry tend to fall into thematic groupings, such as "gardens," "industrial," and "forest." In each case, as she points out, "the natural and artificial are inextricably mixed." For any given piece there's usually a compelling narrative of its creation. In *Jewellery Life*, her 2010 self-documenting catalogue (the second in a planned series), she includes a brooch that features a blue glass bird in a nest of sharp silver forms set with diamonds. The image—mysterious and lovely—draws us in, and sure enough, there's a story behind it. Britton owned such a bird as a child, but it was only in 2001 when she was living in Europe that she learned of its origin as an example of the glassblower's art. Such pieces had been made in Germany's Thüringen forest since the 1500s; the region's Christmas ornaments are world famous.

This revelation sparked a powerful wave of nostalgia, which would eventually emerge in Britton's work in 2007.[3] Britton traveled numerous times to the forest and worked directly with glassblowers to create shapes and forms to her order, among them blue glass birds. Here is her poetic description of that experience:

> *Imagine this. You catch a train, change trains, change again, and once more change into a very small train with a single carriage. The train rolls on and upwards, through ever-darker forests, stripped of all deciduous trees so the fast-growing pines can fire the furnaces. The valleys are steeper, darker, even the houses are black and shiny in their snakelike slate skins. You are now deep in the middle mountains of Germany. Freezing, isolated, mysterious. . . . Here they make glass: glass animals, glass decorations for trees, glass eyes. In this place there is a mixture of a natural and constructed environment so*

"I play out tensions and beautiful collisions in a small complex space."



Two Birds (brooch), 2010
sterling silver, diamonds, paint, glass
3 x 3 1⁄8 x 3⁄4"
PHOTO: DIRK EISEL

Dawn (brooch), 2012
sterling silver, plastics, fabric
2 ¾ x 2 x 1 ⅛"
PHOTO: HELEN BRITTON

Horse with Flowers (brooch), 2012
sterling silver, steel, vintage glass, Australian pink diamonds
2 ⅜ x 5 ¾ x ½"
PHOTO: HELEN BRITTON

intimately entwined that there is no possibility to discern any seams between the two. This counts not only for the things that are made here, but also for the forest itself. Draw the animals, draw the atmosphere, draw the devils into the rings with a graver, set their eyes with precious stones. Have the horse made and the wolf, the raven and the bird, set them too with diamonds and send them galloping back into the world. House/universe, Heimlich/Unheimlich,[4] territory/de-territorialization, the small and the large refrain. It's all contained within.

As this evocative passage suggests, Britton's jewelry functions for her as a means to express and share her deeply personal experiences of the world—its mysteries, confusions, and interrelated forms, both natural and man-made. Her adventures with the glassblowers yielded a collection—titled "Wet, Glittering, Dark: Shiny, Pointy, Sharp"—that she describes as "the first project that has a geographical specificity outside of my own country."[5] It was also a way, she says, of coming to terms with living in Europe—"a way for me to really arrive."

Britton grew up on the edge of Newcastle, an industrial city in New South Wales known for steelworks and shipbuilding. Her childhood memories include "the heat, the stench, the noise" of industry, but also the bucolic haven of her mother's family farm, which afforded proximity to animals and nature. Camping on the beach or in the bush was an intense part of her life. She often collected natural and old, discarded objects: shells, leaves, bottles, horseshoes, car parts, junk jewelry, glass shards and such. "I started making jewelry as a child," she says, "I had a good collection of inexpensive costume jewelry, complete and broken pieces." Also, it was part of daily life to make things and to draw. "My aunties and my grandmother all quite intensively and inventively had their own hobbies, like making pictures out of bits of bark, making their own clothes," as Britton still does. "That was very normal," she says, "part of the daily life of women, and as a result I became interested in contemporary fashion." At the same time, and for many years, Britton enjoyed mechanical things, actually building cars and motorbikes as a hobby.

Britton started art school in this bifurcated city—country/feminine—masculine environment, studying in New Castle and Sydney. When she was twenty-one, in the mid-1980s, she took a year off to drive around Australia—camping, taking photographs, drawing, and collecting—pursuits that continue to inform her work in profound ways. She first saw contemporary jewelry in Kalgoorlie, the Western Australian gold-mining town where the American jeweler Sam Farmer had come to teach. "He taught me my jewelry skills in the beginning," says Britton who was taking classes in Perth at the time. She began to show jewelry along with drawings and textile work, but "it wasn't until I did my MFA in metals that I really connected to the international scene at all," she says. "It was only when I came to Europe at the age of thirty that my practice as a jeweler really intensified."

Britton's path to Europe, specifically Munich, came about through a series of coincidences. First, one of her teachers, David Walker, submitted photos of her work to Talente, the

Any given piece of Britton's jewelry can be viewed as a gestalt of what she sees, collects, and responds to.

international competition for young makers that is part of the annual Schmuck exhibition in Munich. "I got in!" says Britton, who was then advised "you have to go to Europe." Once again, Walker eased the way by introducing Britton to the teacher and jeweler Otto Künzli, who invited her to do a guest semester for her MFA at the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich. "At the time," says Britton, "I did not realize the significance of that school." She also studied at Amsterdam's Sandberg Institute and at San Diego State University with Helen Shirk, whose techniques and nature-based forms held resonance for Britton. After completing her honors MFA program in Australia, she returned to Munich to continue studies with Künzli, intending to spend a year or two there. But, as fate would have it, she met and fell in love with the Swiss jeweler David Bielander. (They lived together for many years but married only recently.) "I stayed," says Britton. "I have an incredible career, thanks to Europe and being recognized here," she says, although "living as a foreigner anywhere in the long term, of course, is very difficult, and homesickness knows no mercy."[6] Despite such conflicting emotions, Britton was drawn into Munich's "very intense history of jewelry, and intense questioning of what jewelry is," although she describes herself as "a much broader maker," given her earlier immersion in the fine arts and photography.

Any given piece of Britton's jewelry can be viewed as a gestalt of what she sees, collects, and responds to—be it a flower garden or a construction site. Photography contributes to her vision, providing her with a means of documenting not just visual stimuli, but experience, and she retains thousands of images in her archive. Drawing—often an integral part of her exhibitions, if space permits—is another important mode of documentation in which she uses color and line to depict items from her junk jewelry collection such as a cartoonish puppy pin, which may recur in her assemblages. The drawing sequences can be enormous; one, in a 2009 Nuremberg retrospective, "Dekorationswut" (roughly translated as "decoration rage"), covered an entire wall.[7] The framed images were hung in a mosaic-like arrangement that honored the Pop-culture subject matter with paper, paint, and ink. Similarly, in designing her catalogues, Britton juxtaposes pieces of jewelry with photographs. But it would be incorrect to assume that Britton abstracts ideas for jewelry from photos because, she cautions, there is really "no linearity." She claims that any direct relationship is coincidental as, say, between a photo of an orange pole in a frozen lake and a brooch of abstract forms in similar colors. But Britton does admit that each of her jewelry pieces is something of a dialogue with the physical world. She explains the dynamic in a statement written for a 2008 exhibition titled "The Things I See":

> *Today when I was cycling over the Donnersbergerbrücke, a small truck passed me by . . . loaded with enormous wooden*

Necklace, 2011
sterling silver, & plastics
length 19 5/8"
PHOTO: DIRK EISEL

Industrial Garden I & II (brooches), 2012
rose gold-plated sterling silver
each 2 ¾ x 1 ⅛ x 1"
PHOTO: DIRK EISEL

Three Shapes Grey (brooch), 2012
rose gold-plated sterling silver, diamonds, paint
2 ¾ x 2 x ¾"
PHOTO: DIRK EISEL

rolls coiled with coloured electrical wire. At the same time . . . I also saw a life-size . . . bright yellow plastic elephant on a trailer that was being used to advertise telephones. . . . I photograph these scenes regularly. . . . When I make my work I am often trying to make sense of these visual experiences, to capture some of these qualities, and although my pieces are not illustrative, they are a direct response to the thing I see.

Before entering the studio to make jewelry, Britton says, "I have my ideas, my themes and my research. Once I start making the work it's kind of abstract. It all relates but I don't know quite how and why, and I try not to analyze it too much. . . . It's a fragile thing." She works exclusively with silver as the base material for everything from mixed-media brooches she calls "baroque conglomerations" to more sedate rings, earrings, and necklaces. She treats metal like paper ("I fold it up, cut it up, paint it") and presents it either blackened or painted, often in bright or pastel colors, sometimes patterned like grosgrain ribbon. In a typical brooch construction, she builds a complex metal armature in which high, squared-off prongs grip plastic or glass components; these in turn could be interleaved with flat metal shapes engraved with patterns, edges rounded or sharp. The result is often an asymmetrical assemblage of forms and objects that seem held in precarious tension. "In so many ways, I'm just a very classical jeweler," says Britton. "Everything is soldered. . . . everything is hand-sawed. I don't use any laser cutting and set my own stones," using only diamonds or sapphires. "Preciousness interests me," she says. In *Wet Horse*, a fantastical brooch from 2009, she set diamonds into the steel body of a pin from the 1930s, adding faceted glass ornaments that project from its galloping hooves like flying fish. (In an alternative version the horse gallops through a field of pressed glass flowers.) A necklace of linked, gold-plated boxes, each containing a candy-colored plastic component, suggests a precious gathering of Proustian madeleines, delicious to imagine as they spark memories of acquisition and desire.

Although Britton has won every major award for art jewelry, she resists the categorical term.[8] "Jewelry is a very profound thing," she says. "It's enough in its own right without having to pretend it's like art or whatever else." Everything she makes is wearable and although her brooches are most widely publicized, Britton emphasizes that she's equally committed to all forms of personal decoration. Her blackened silver rings, set with diamonds and sapphires, eschew the assemblage approach for experiments with scale, shape, and volume. Layering the metal is a favorite technique that gives strength and depth to the band, which might support a classic oval or a mischievous devil's mask. Britton's concern for wearability, and what it means to *wear* jewelry, is explored most directly in "Awkward Beauty," an ongoing collaboration with two fellow Aussies, launched in 2011. Britton and garment designer Justine McKnight design pieces in response to each other's work and photographer Michelle Taylor documents the results. Taylor's edgy fashion photos, shot in abandoned railway workshops in Perth, reveal the interconnected power of designs by Britton and McKnight when worn together,

Page from 2011 catalogue. Awkward Beauty: Helen Britton, Justine McKnight, and Michelle Taylor, *an ongoing collaboration with Helen Britton, garment designer Justine McKnight, and photographer Michelle Taylor.*

as intended. In an introductory essay to the "Awkward Beauty" catalogue, Robert Cook admires Britton's jewelry for its "weird, slightly off-kilter paralleling of the natural world," in which plastic floral forms inhabit silver tubes and green metal towers are capped with Australian agate cabouchons.[9]

Britton's commitment to the wearer—to the interplay of body and object—is stunningly evident in her recent bracelet designs: dramatic cuffs, loaded with hand-formed metal elements that jangle like archaic musical instruments. It has taken Britton ten years to find the right form for bracelets, she says, one that "has its own autonomy, its own authority as a piece." Kinetic, auditory, and visually aggressive, the cuffs seem a perfect melding of the two contrasting geographies that inhabit her Jungian consciousness: Australia, which she describes as "a land where the natural often looks artificial," and her adopted home, Munich, "an environment that has been artificially constructed for so long it seems natural." Britton's jewelry springs from the intersection of these worlds, the surreal middle ground where she continues to collect, observe and record, finding joy and romance in the process of discovery and making.

Andrea DiNoto writes on art, craft and design.

1. Keynote address, Australian Jewellers and Metalsmiths Conference, Perth, 2010.
2. Helen Britton, in *Second Nature* (Munich, 2004).
3. Helen Britton, artist's statement, Galerie Louise Smit, Amsterdam.
4. *Heimlich* (homey, or homely); *Unheimlich* (uncanny, or eerily familiar).
5. Helen Britton, artist's statement, Galerie Louise Smit, Amsterdam, 2001.
6. Helen Britton, in *Helen Britton: Jewelry Life* (Munich, 2010).
7. For an interview with Britton, discussing the exhibition and drawings at Galerie Rob Koudijs, Amsterdam, see Susan Cummins, "Helen Britton: Heterogene," July 20, 2013, *Art Jewelry Forum*, www.artjewelryforum.org.
8. Britton's work is in the National Gallery of Australia; the Pinakothek der Modern, Munich; Schmuck Musewum Pforzheim; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, among others. In 2005, she was awarded the Herbert Hofmann Prize for Excellence in Contemporary Jewelry, and, in 2006, the state prize of Bavaria for craftsmanship alongside a project grant from the city of Munich. In 2007, Britton was an artist in residence in Erfurt, Germany. In 2008, she was invited to participate in Exempla at the International Craft Fair in Munich. In 2009, she had a solo exhibition at the Bavarian Crafts Council gallery to coincide with the International Craft Fair in Munich.
9. Robert Cook, "The Intimate Porosity of an Awkward Kind of Beauty," in *Awkward Beauty: Helen Britton, Justine McKnight, and Michelle Taylor*, exh. cat. (Perth: FORM, 2011), n.p.

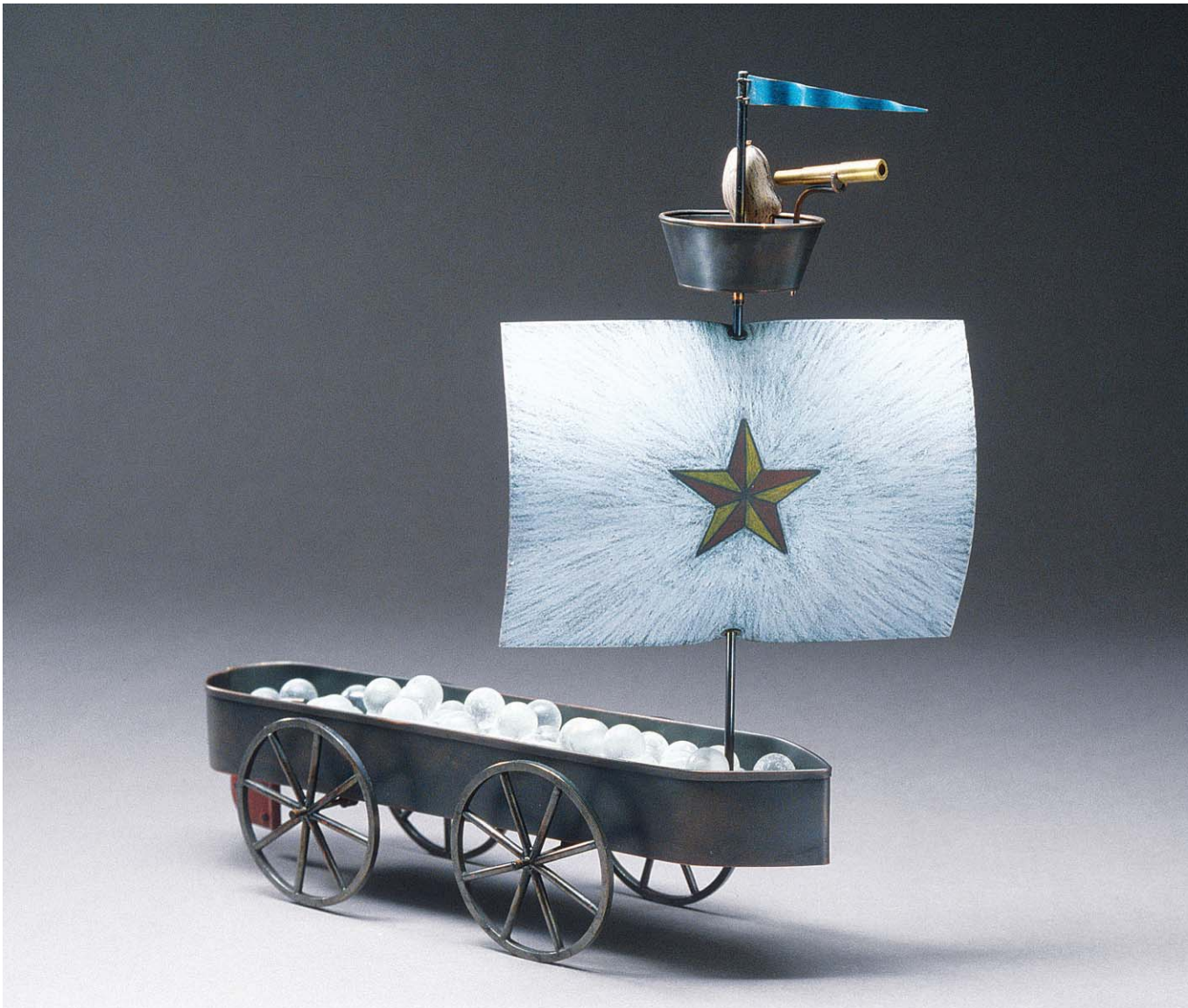
Rings, 2012
sterling silver, diamonds
size variable
PHOTO: HELEN BRITTON

2564

Mark Hartung
Motion, Emotion, and Memory

BY GLEN R. BROWN

2564 (Location of Inspiration), 2013
re-cycled wood, copper, glass, patina
8 x 2 ½ x 13"



All My Marbles, 2000
glass, copper, prisma-color pencil, patina
7 x 3 x 8"

A DALMATIAN BALANCES a ball on its nose as two monkeys, smartly attired in bellhop uniforms of red and blue, cling to a hoop perched precariously above. Unicycles, propellers, and whirligigs invoke rotary motion, even while at rest. A miniature locomotive and its portly tender stand ready to roll down imaginary tracks, while canoes, cogs, and three-masted square-riggers set sail, not on the waves of faraway seas but rather on sets of axles and spoked wheels ideal for traversing bedroom floors. The mixed-media sculptures of Ohio artist Mark Hartung draw inspiration from antiquated machinery and the unassuming forms of folk art, but their most obvious affinities are for tin toys of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Through references to these, Hartung reflects on specific events and people who have shaped his life and probes general emotional aspects of memory that should be recognizable to anyone.

Antique toys are rife with allusions. Metonymically they conjure the hands of children who have long passed into the darkness; metaphorically their aged appearance suggests the distance from one's own childhood and a blissfully uncomplicated worldview that, once dispelled, cannot be regained in a lifetime. Drawing on these figurative associations, Hartung's works evoke nostalgia, even melancholy. At the same time, toys are designed to be objects of desire, and

Hartung's creations generate a mingling of pleasure and pathos not unlike that which characterizes memories of people and events.

My Blue Canoe, 2000
copper, prisma-color pencil, patina
8 x 20 x 14"
PHOTO: ROBERT MULLER

even as their colors fade, they retain their ties to leisure, enjoyment, and indulgence in fantasy. Consequently, Hartung's creations generate a mingling of pleasure and pathos not unlike that which characterizes memories of people and events both treasured and lost forever in time.

Although he has acquired an obvious facility with metal, Hartung did not begin his career as an artist in that medium. A glass major at Kent State University, he ran a successful glassblowing studio for seven years in the 1980s before experiencing a restlessness about the future of his art. "There seemed to be more," he recalls, "Another part of me wanted to express itself."[1] Representation, with the greater possibilities that it offered for narrative, was something different to explore. In addition, he was intrigued by the idea of incorporating actual motion into his sculptures. Though impressed by the miniature kinetic clowns and acrobats of Alexander Calder's *Circus*, which years before he had seen at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, Hartung needed the inspiration of encounters with folk art and tin toys to set him decisively on the track toward a new body of work.

Developing his skills at fabrication in sheet copper, Hartung began constructing sculptures that joined aesthetics with ad hoc engineering to create objects ambiguously situated between the categories of sculpture and toys. The ability of these objects to move was key to their ambiguity and to their potential as provocative devices. Since the time of Naum Gabo's *Kinetic Sculpture: Standing Wave*

Tedium/2, 2001
copper, steel, prisma-color pencil, patina
10 x 10 x 10"

Tedium/3, 2001
copper, prisma-color pencil, patina
18 x 10 x 10"

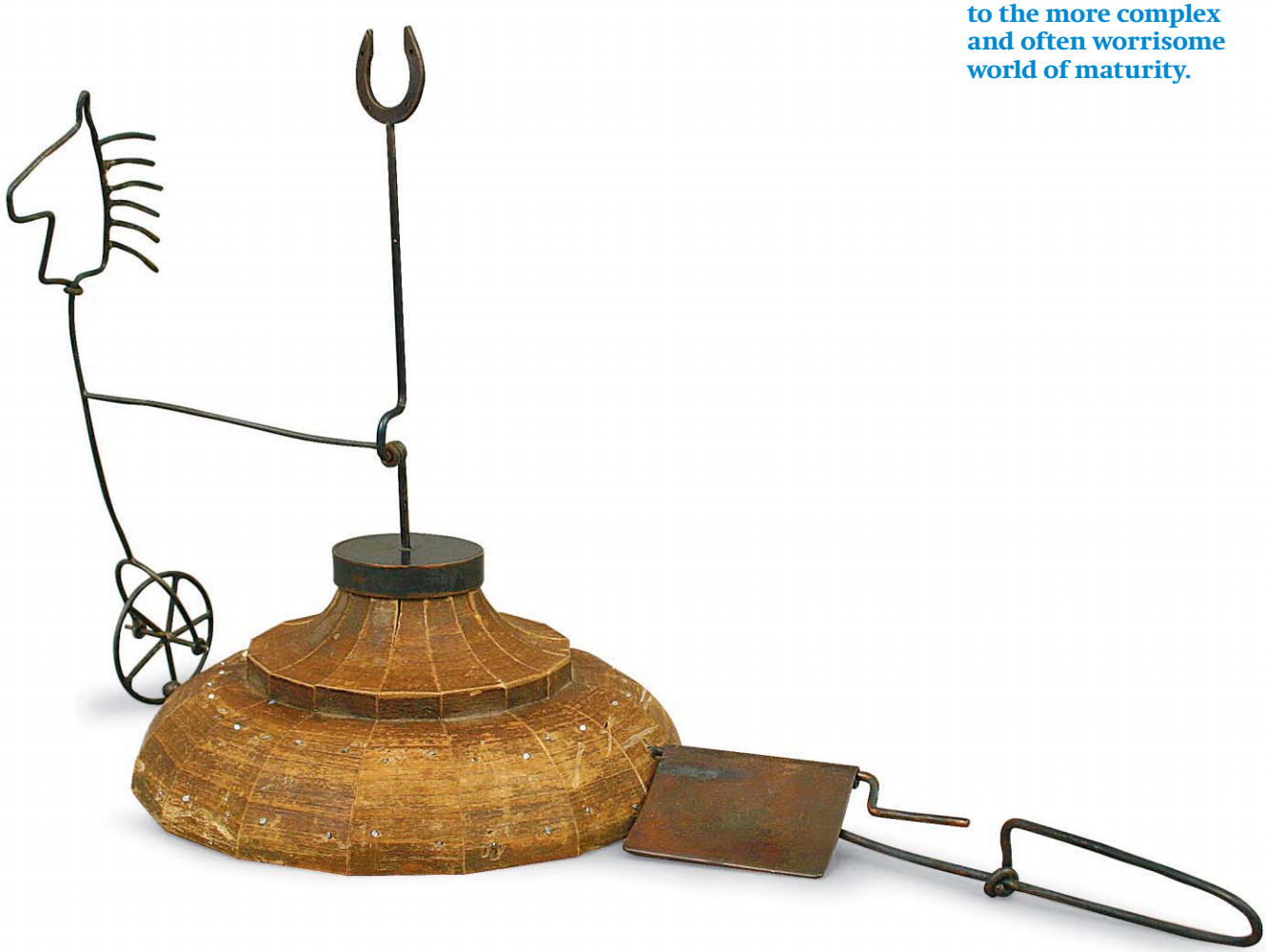
(1919–20), Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray's *Rotary Glass* (1920), and Fernand Léger's *Ballet Mecanique* (1924), real motion has been employed for critical purposes in art. It is, however, typical of Hartung's works that the use of motion was inspired not by interest in theoretical issues about sculpture and functionality or art and design but rather by personal memories and emotions. "My uncle had mechanical skills," he recalls, "and I was always fascinated by how he could fix anything. If something went wrong, he was the guy who could fix it. I was the kind of kid who wanted to get in there and help, but I had to just stand back and watch. Now I can do what I want. I'm not restricted by anyone telling me not to help or to just go get the screwdriver or the hammer."

If tinkering with mechanisms is for Hartung in some ways a confirmation of the freedom that comes with maturity, the content of his sculptures often conveys appreciation of freedom of a different kind: the freedom from responsibility, from worry, and even from the demands of decorum that is characteristic of childhood. The boat, a common element in his sculptures can, for example, be traced to early memories of his father and a regularly abused Styrofoam sailboat. "He would take us out in it when we were little kids and sail us around and tell us stories," Hartung remembers. "When he wasn't looking, I got a real kick out of taking bites into the Styrofoam, of the sensation of sinking my teeth into it. That may be where a lot of the inspiration for the boat imagery comes from."

Hartung's boats and ships clearly invoke the metaphor of life as a journey from the simplicity of childhood to

Gallop, 2004
wood, copper, patina
6 x 6 x 6"

Hartung's boats and ships clearly invoke the metaphor of life as a journey from the simplicity of childhood to the more complex and often worrisome world of maturity.



the more complex and often worrisome world of maturity. The sculpture *All My Marbles*—depicting a longboat on wheels that carries a cargo of "clearies" and an abstract head peering through a small brass telescope from the crow's nest above—reflects on the difficulties of navigating adulthood, of being one's own captain, weathering unexpected storms, and "keeping all your marbles intact." Another boat sculpture, *My Blue Canoe*, is more specific in its allusions to stages of life, the changes that they bring, and Hartung's own experiences. "A number of years ago my father expressed interest in having an old-style Native American canoe," he explains. "For a Father's- Day gift we decided to get him one. It was blue. He used it a couple of times and fulfilled his romantic dream of paddling around in it. Then he returned it to me, saying, 'I think that you should have this now.' When I represented it, I turned it into an all-terrain vehicle for myself."

In formal terms, *My Blue Canoe* is typical of Hartung's work, reflecting a taste for colors that are at once bold and ostensibly weathered. The vibrant but streaky surfaces have their origin in a technique popularized by metalsmith Helen Shirk. In 1989, when Hartung's wife, metalsmith and enamelist Gretchen Goss, began a stint as a visiting professor at San Diego State University, Hartung enrolled in Shirk's course on patination and became enamored of prismacolor pencils as a means of applying vivid hues to metal. "The way that I get the prismacolor to adhere to the surfaces is to sandblast them to give them a bit of a tooth," he explains. "The pieces become something like three-dimensional coloring books

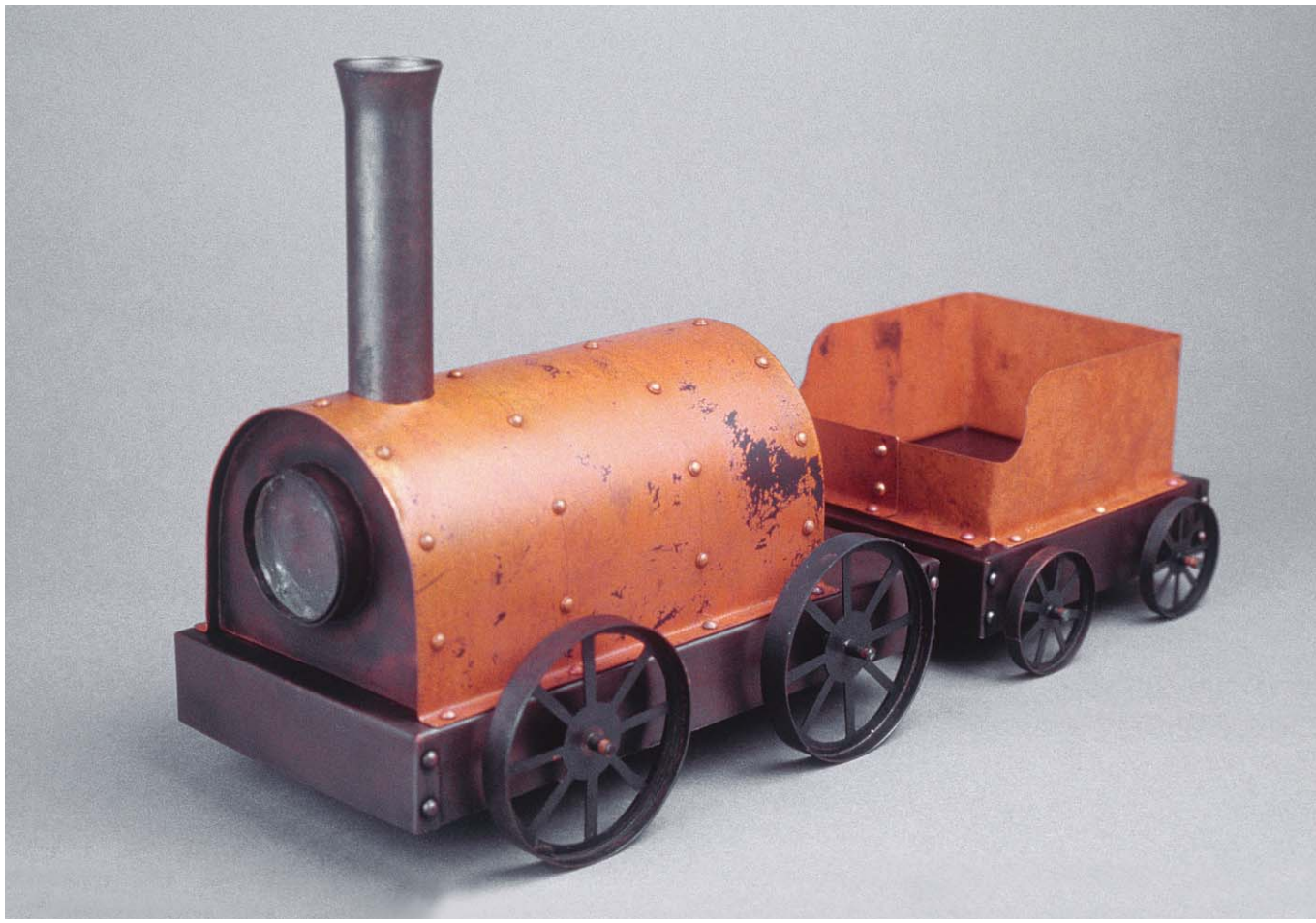
Pipe Dream, 2008
copper, patina, prisma-color pencil
7 x 5 x 18"

for me. I can't wait to get them together so that I can figure out how I'm going to color them."

Allusions to coloring books and toys suggest that Hartung finds simple enjoyment in the production of his sculptures. There are even hints that his works facilitate escape from the more mundane aspects of life. The three versions of the sculpture *Tedium*—which turns on a Sisyphean repetition, a "going around in circles" that contrasts starkly with the suggestion of infinite possible courses for his freewheeling boat sculptures—make specific reference to the part-time and full-time jobs that he has held over the years. While these jobs have helped to pay the bills, they have offered little of the intellectual stimulation or opportunity for personal growth that comes from his work in the studio. "I've always had a job," he explains. "Sometimes it feels that I'm stuck in a rut, but there are still ideas rolling around in my head."

Hartung has exploited the associative potential of antique toys to tap into the universal, producing sculptures that are at once ambiguous and magnetic.

Ironically, the tedium of a routine job may in some ways be an effective medium for Hartung's process of conceiving content, which tends to resemble daydreaming or free association. A spark of inspiration can set off a succession of fragmentary images that ultimately crystallize into a clear, if sometimes odd, vision. One such example served as a basis for the sculpture *Gallop*. At the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Maine, one evening in 2004, Hartung



Half Round Train, 1998
copper, glass, patina
9 x 4 x 14"

listened as director Stuart Kestenbaum read a recent poem. "It was called 'Prayer,'" Hartung recalls, "and it described how everything had changed and asked what had happened to enjoyment of the simple things in life, such as the gallop. I just had this vision of him waltzing across the Haystack compound on one of those toy horses from long ago. I couldn't get back to the studio fast enough!"

The obscurity of such inspiration—and equally the specificity of personal memories that so often make their way into Hartung's sculptures—might have spawned impenetrable objects that afforded the viewer few starting points for interpretation. Instead, Hartung has exploited the associative potential of antique toys to tap into the universal, producing sculptures that are at once ambiguous and magnetic, that effortlessly draw the viewer into a space of experience both familiar and mysterious. "When I look at one of my pieces I imagine myself on it or think of the place where I might see it," Hartung states. "I hope it works that way for other people too: that it takes them to another place. Some people have made connections that mimic what I was going through when I was making the pieces. I find that fascinating. I thought that I might be the only one who would have those feelings about them, but people do connect."

Glen R. Brown is a Professor of Art History and Associate Head of the Art Department at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

1. All quotes in this essay: Mark Hartung, personal communication, December 4, 2013.

Reviews

"Ce qui n'est pas là: Gabrielle Desmarais and Anne Marie Rébillard"

Galerie Noël Guyomarc'h
Montreal, Canada
October 4–20, 2013

by Lyne Gagnon

In the display window, a few sketches with intriguing lines. On the floor, words laid out, all in black. Around the gallery, natural wood pedestals holding brooches, rings, pendants, and earrings. Some enormous pieces, black, into which one wants to recklessly dive, then smaller ones, skin tone, that we wish to examine, caress.

Gabrielle Desmarais and Anne-Marie Rébillard, two contemporary jewelry artists, crossed paths at Le Labo, a workshop hosted by gallery owner Noël Guyomarc'h. Over time, Guyomarc'h sensed resonance between those two young art jewelers. Trusting his instinct, he invited them to collaborate on an original collection that would then be shown in the gallery, resulting in the exhibition "Ce qui n'est pas là" (That which isn't there).

The two jewelers chose wood as their primary material. Desmarais was picturing pieces of large dimensions to which she would add gemstones. A lot of gemstones. Rébillard opted for driftwood, whatever the tide surrendered. Desmarais found inspiration in geodes while Rébillard, like an anthropologist, studied the correlation between nature and culture, the contradiction between the temporality of human life and the indestructible substances that are man-made. As she explains, "It is somewhat strange to me to find myself facing immortal plastic flowers laid down on the grave of a loved one whose body is turning to dust underground."

From this starting point, Desmarais devised a series of cocoons, subdued, elegant, black, and matte. Oversized brooches looking like blocks of graphite that she sculpted ardently and with instinct. The work presents a series of inner worlds that we suppose were created so the entire beauty of the universe could take refuge in them. Our eyes cannot help but linger on these pieces, like a brooch disguised as a clam that seems ready to close itself off at any moment to protect the inflorescence of pink quartz it contains. Other brooches and earrings resemble geodes, covered with onyx and black gemstone fragments that may hold some forgotten secret. Through these fictive worlds, traces of humankind, sensual and poetic, are suggested by skin tone shades.

Rébillard gave life to wood fragments and plastic shreds, rendered unrecognizable, with textured shapes that transmute some into fractured bones, others into prostheses rendered necessary to a new form of existence. The work is deeply moving. Like fragile ligament joints, cotton threads with minute knots articulate the compositions, often in triads. Behind the apparent abstraction in these ingenuous assemblies, we sense a family of living beings, hybrid and vulnerable. Each one seems to want to tell us a story. We want to listen to them, get to know them. We want to slide a finger in a sort of hand-spoon that ends the long wood arm of one of the brooches in the collection. We wish to work our way back up its shoulder and brush against its striated body, turned into bodice that wears a headless warrior's helmet.

Gabrielle Desmarais and Anne-Marie Rébillard have transcended the transposition of worlds using very different approaches but in perfect harmony. With audacity and

Gabrielle Desmarais
Cocoon (brooch), 2013
wood, graphite pigments, crushed black stones, silver
4 x 2 7/8 x 2"
PHOTO: ANTHONY MCLEAN

Anne-Marie Rébillard
Trace (brooch), 2013
driftwood, plastic, epoxy, pigments, cotton
2 ⅛ x 5 ½ x 1 ⅛"
PHOTO: MICHEL GAUVIN

impetuousness, Desmarais transformed the world of geodes into inviting refuge-universes. In the poetic action of simple metaphors, Rébillard created touching specimens of an imaginary ethnicity made up of flesh and plastic. If the chosen formal strategies deviate from conventional jewelry techniques, its form isn't any less appealing. Conceptualization provides the work with many meanings that can be read and reread, and the temperate and efficient spatial setting of the collections echoes with magnificent precision.

Lyne Gagnon is a Montreal-based writer and artist.

"Jewels by JAR"

Metropolitan Museum of Art,
New York City
November 20, 2013–
March 9, 2014

by Andrea DiNoto

The Bronx-born jeweler Joel Arthur Rosenthal, known as JAR, has been working in Paris for more than 35 years, producing—with his longtime partner Pierre Jeannet—exquisite objects for privileged clients who need not ask the price of a life-size pavé diamond tulip-blossom brooch or a pair of emerald-set pendant earrings conceived as tripartite topiary trees. But Rosenthal's cachet (he is famously publicity-averse and sells only by appointment) is not based solely on extravagant use of gemstones. He is known, as well, for incorporating nonprecious materials—wood, titanium, aluminum, resin—into artful creations that bewitch the eye. As this glittering show demonstrates, with over 400 examples, Rosenthal balances astonishing naturalism with the quirky playfulness of a latter-day Fabergé in the creation of jewels, many of which can be justly called objets d'art. However, as the first retrospective at the Met devoted to a contemporary living artist of gems (and only the second time JAR jewels have been on public view), this show has raised questions, notably in the *New York Times*, of commercialism, here based primarily on the puzzling lack of curatorial statements or wall captions.

The darkened exhibition space at the museum supposedly replicates the ambiance of JAR's Place Vendôme shop in Paris, so there's an undeniable suggestion of window-shopping as viewers peer longingly at pieces—all lent by owners—dating from the 1980s through the present day. While the museum's director, Thomas P. Campbell, observes in the catalogue that "JAR's creations recall the best of the Renaissance masters," the noncritical catalogue essay, "Observing JAR," by dealer Adrian Sassoon, in no way develops this worthy theme. Still, we must be thankful for the opportunity to view these rarely seen jewels, many awesomely beautiful in both sculptural concept and construction. (Most JAR pieces are made on a core of oxidized silver; rings, of silver lined with gold or platinum.)

Rosenthal is revealed as a master colorist, using stones to stipple, tint, and swash. His influences become clear: an early, painterly fascination with needlepoint has been translated into color-driven pavé; prized antique cameos, micromosaics, and 18th-century eye miniatures (paintings of a loved one's eye) are integrated into new settings and boxes; even the forms of Mugal architecture are referenced, as are Pop Art (although a trompe l'oeil carved wood bagel seemed to need a little "everything" in pavé) and Japanese prints, specifically an exquisite Hiroshige-styled wave brooch cresting with diamond foam. Abstract forms are also in evidence, as with Rosenthal's signature "drawing" jewels made of diamond-set lines and squiggles. In one inspired necklace design, a line of diamond lightning crackles from one black aluminum bead to another. Ironically, these wearable, "modern" pieces appear conventional next to Rosenthal's extraordinary botanical jewelry, a tradition he honors and updates with life-size roses, tulips camellias,

Lilac Brooches, 2001
diamonds, lilac sapphires, garnets, aluminum, silver, gold
PHOTO: JOZSEF TARI

Zebra Brooch, 1987
agate, diamonds, silver, gold
PHOTO: JOZSEF TARI

iris, clover, and pansies, not to mention freesia, blue poppies, hollyhocks, lilacs, catkins, and even a lowly orange peel. Pavé predominates but the sure-fire eye-dazzling technique is occasionally abandoned for modernist risk-taking, at least according to the dictates of conventional high jewelry: one camellia brooch has aluminum petals; and in a pair of pendant earrings, tiny, iridescent green beetle wings are arranged as shimmering fantasy flowers. In another extraordinary example, every floret in a pair of life-size lilac blossoms is reproduced in cast aluminum, then further enhanced with "a staggering total of 21,000 stones," if one can believe the catalogue. Rosenthal expends almost as much effort on common vegetables. Onion, berry, carrot, and radish get the pavé treatment as does a lettuce leaf and two curvaceous asparagus spears, organic, no doubt.

While flowers predominate as the jeweler's favored form, his animal jewels most convincingly evoke comparisons to Renaissance creations. A realistically carved, fist-sized sheep's-head brooch sports cascading aluminum curls; another, also a sheep's head, gazing with dreamy star-sapphire eyes, models a tousled hairdo made entirely from clusters of oriental pearls. A titanium elephant-head brooch wears its own diamond aigrette, *en tremblant*; and a zebra carved from agate sports plumes and a diamond bridle. Then there are the butterflies and moths, a wall of them glittering in every imaginable color and gem combination, wings open or folded, several the size of one's palm. Here was a missed opportunity to show the reverse of at least one jewel, an area in which Rosenthal's celebrated workmanship supposedly shines. Tucked in among the Lepidoptera are a few exquisite dragonflies—in obvious homage to René Lalique, the French master, never to be outdone—one of which carries faceted crystals on golden gossamer wings. Among the world's legendary luxury jewelers, Rosenthal is something of an outlier: lavish with gemstones, yes, but an artist nevertheless who plays by his own rules.

Andrea DiNoto writes on art, craft and design.

"Nanz Aalund: What a Pill"

November 7–30, 2013
Core Gallery, Seattle

by Matthew Kangas

Nanz Aalund's recent exhibition at Core, of work made in 2013, was a good introduction for

viewers who are not part of the intense art jewelry scene to which she belongs. Writer, editor, and instructor, Aalund has won several awards including two De Beers Diamonds Today, and others from the World Titanium Council, American Pearl Company, and Platinum Guild International. Her work has been included in group exhibitions throughout the United States and in the United Kingdom. It has also been carried by Tiffany & Co., Neiman Marcus, and Nordstrom.

With such an impressive track record, Aalund's current art focuses on a particular area: pillboxes. A mixture of unique works, custom commissions, and potential production pieces, Aalund's interpretations demonstrate how varied the genre can be: square, cylindrical, conical, rectangular, and triangular. They arise from ornamented Arts and Crafts objects of the late 19th and early 20th centuries but are markedly contemporary through vividly evident handmade markings, textures, hinges, and struts.

In a tiny nod to Ramona Solberg, a Pacific Northwest designer-craftsman who ran the jewelry program at the University of Washington School of Art (Auland's alma mater), *Number 3, Number 4,* and *Number 5* recycle found typewriter keys as lid pulls that can also be grasped as openers. Low-relief patterns cover each silver container and are complemented by ingenious 18k gold closing pins that act as springs.

Boudoir Medicine Repository sits on a four-pronged holder for its conical base. Something for milady's dresser top that will look good near her jewel box, this work has 18k and 22k details. Similarly luxe, *Royal Dalek* is a tapered cylinder with a domed lid crowned by a red spherical quartz stone. Opened by a golden push button, the container also resembles medieval drinking tankards. Like the others, it has a quietly corrugated surface, soothing to the touch, a built-in therapeutic device for any ailing user.

Two final works in copper suggest additional material directions the series could take, toward either more modest materials or those with even greater luxury connotations. *Bespoke By a Patron* is the shape of a miniature lidded kitchen garbage can or rectangular laundry hamper. No more than one inch high, it eschews gems and gold in favor of copper and a brass hinge, yet still exudes an elegance of scale. *Happy Little Can's* cylindrical sides have an overlapping pattern of concentric circles. With the lid cut at an angle, pills could be stacked one atop another. The top and bottom are brushed, matte silver.

The Core Gallery show is altogether impressive on an unlikely topic, as Aalund expands the range of functional objects that fine jewelry making can address.

Matthew Kangas is a Seattle-based writer and a corresponding editor at Art in America.

Royal Dalek Pill Box, 2013
silver, rutilated quartz, 18k gold
2 x 1"
PHOTO: DOUG YAPLE

Happy Little Can, 2013
copper, brass, silver
1 x ¼ x ⅞"
PHOTO: DOUG YAPLE

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New SNAG Board members Angela Bubash and Jen Townsend.

SNAG Board Welcomes New Members

SNAG's Board of Directors welcomes appointed members Jen Townsend and Angela Bubash. Jen Townsend joined the Board in August 2013. Jen has a BFA from RIT and an MFA from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Jen has owned and operated her studio for over eleven years. She has also taught workshops and classes at Penland School of Crafts, Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, and East Carolina University, to name a few. Her work can be seen in *Art Jewelry Today 2*; *500 Gemstone Jewels*; and *Showcase: 500 Art Necklaces*. She has exhibited nationally and internationally, including a 2007 two-person show at The Orkney Museum in Scotland. Her work is also in the permanent collection of The Imperial War Museum, London, England. Jen lives and works in Pittsford, NY. She is Board liaison for the Online Presence Committee, editor of SNAG's *Riveting News*, and manages the SNAG page on Facebook. Angela Bubash joined the Board in January 2014. Angela has a BFA from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania and an MFA from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. She currently teaches metalsmithing, design, and art appreciation at Appalachian State University, Boone, NC. Angela produces unique and limited edition jewelry and sculpture for galleries, exhibitions, and private commissions. She has been a resident artist at Penland School of Crafts, has taught throughout the United States, and has work in *500 Rings*, as well as *Metalsmith* and *American Craft* magazines. She lives in Spruce Pine, NC. Angela is Board liaison for *Metalsmith* magazine and the Editorial Advisory Committee. Welcome aboard to both!

Forging Entrepreneurs Symposium

This year's Forging Entrepreneurs Symposium, *The Inside Track*, will be held November 9 in Atlanta, GA. at the High Museum's Walter C. Hill Auditorium. It is hosted this year by the Atlanta Contemporary Jewelry Show and will take place the day after the show closes. The lineup includes lectures and workshops that will address marketing, legal advice, studio practice business advice, innovation in the field, and other aspects of professional development.

SNAG Announces New Staff

Monica Hampton has officially joined the SNAG staff fulltime as Education Director. Monica has worked as the Director of Education and Professional Development for the Society for Environmental Graphic Design; Director of Education for the American Craft Council; and Program Manager for the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum. For the last year, she has been a part-time contractor for SNAG, producing our 2014 conference. Monica will oversee SNAG's Educational Programs, which include conferences, symposiums, and the newly launched mentoring program, Road 2 Success. She lives and works from her home in Brooklyn, NY.

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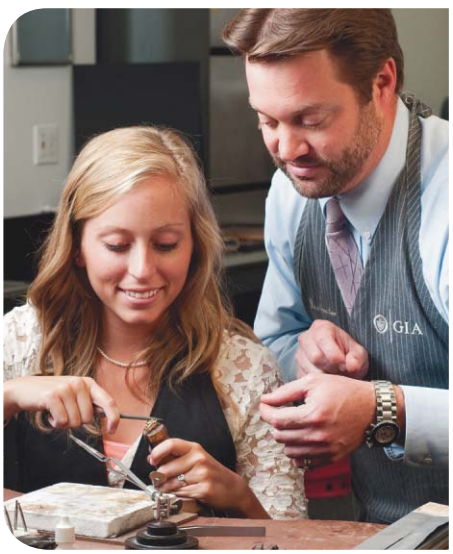

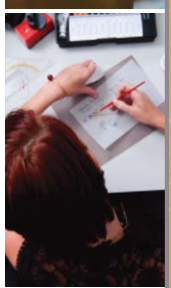

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STATEMENT | BIO | INFO

Claudio Pino is world renowned, especially for his unique sculptural rings. Whether exploring systems in motion, metamorphosis of insects or the pace of urban life, his designs always revolve around combination of colours and shapes. He is passionate about gemstones and fascinated by their properties. He juxtaposes icy silver with the warm glow of gold, calm green emeralds with vivid red rubies, complimented with the fresh hue of white pearls. Each of his design portrays a slice of life, a perspective of the rhythm and poetry of the world in which we all live.

Maker Profile of Claudio Pino - Photos by Arkan Zakharov

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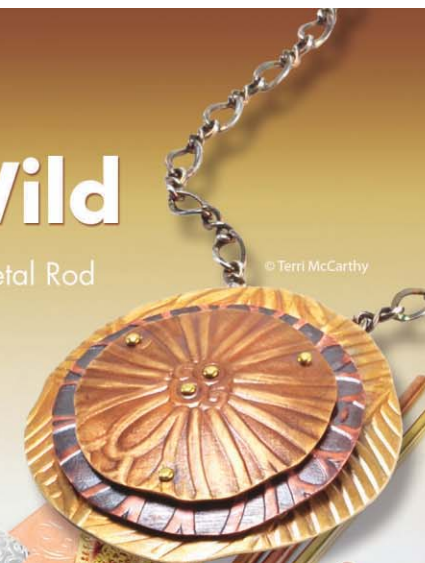

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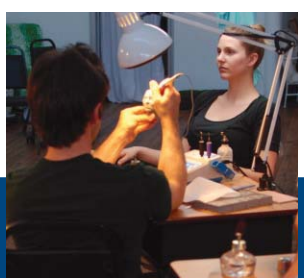

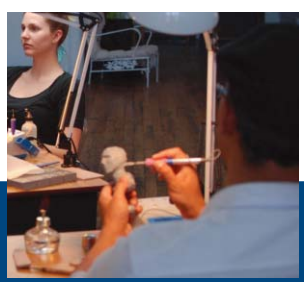

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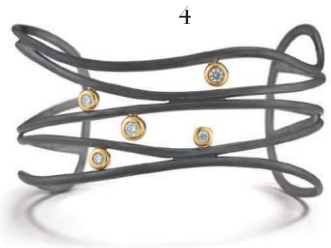
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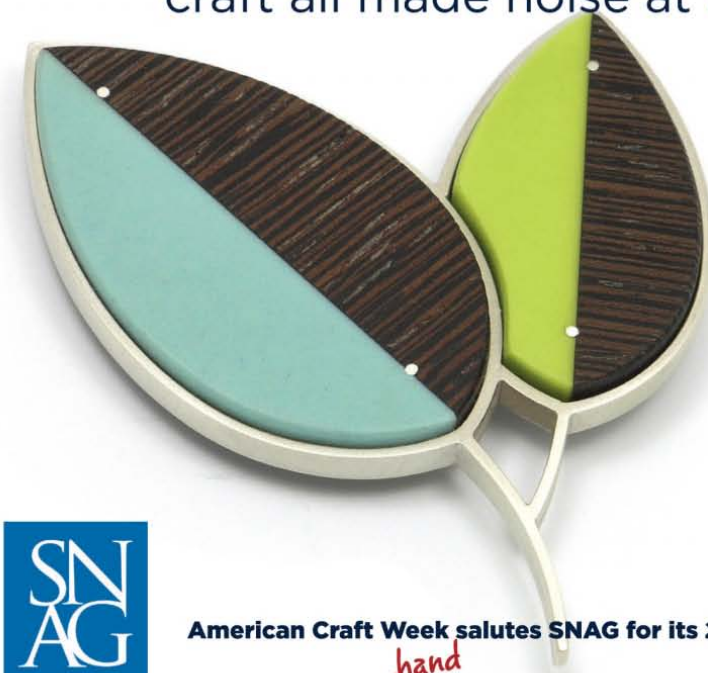

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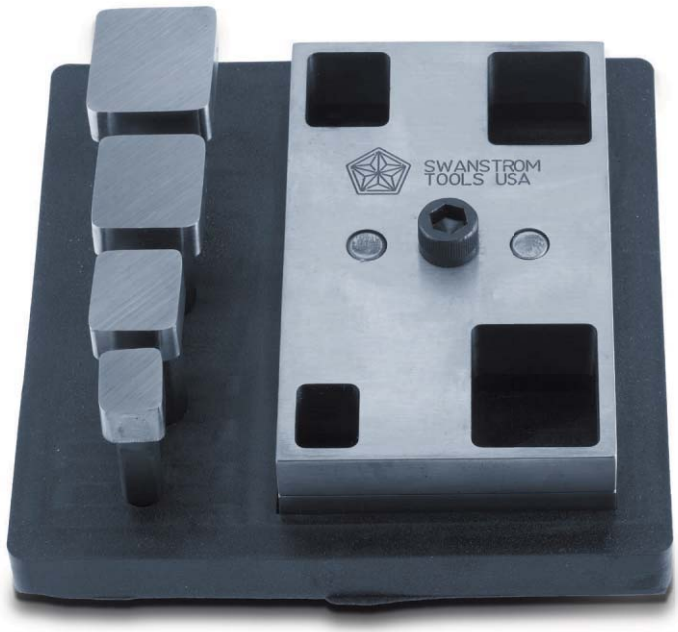

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